

Anand Karaj

The Sikh Marriage Ceremony



Prof. Darshan Singh Khalsa

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by
Prof. Darshan Singh Khalsa

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Forewor

In the four stanzas of the Shabad of Lāvā composed in Sī Rāg, Gurū Rām Dās Jī has given a direction of Spiritual Bliss (Sal Anand) to the mundane affairs of the householder (grahist) . He has made this a prime route for the attainment of Complete Bliss Lord by spreading the greenery of God's Name through Sā Saṅgat (Holy Congregation). Sādh Saṅgat is the oneness equipoise of the feeling of non-attachment (bairāg) and elation (chāu) which are derived from the Holy Fear (Nirmal Bhau) of Gurū's word.

Sakala dharama mai grahisatu pradhāna hai.

Household is the topmost of all righteous ways.

(Kabit 376, Bhāi Gurdās)

Gurū Jī has not called this household a mere union of two physical bodies but given it a form of "One Soul in two bodies" where there is no scope for discrimination, ego, selfishness and suspicion that cause breach in the couple's life. As love, faith, sympathy, sacrifice and truth enter the household that produces wondrous bliss in their lives, a marriage becomes 'Anand Kāraj'.

Today, the bliss, love and success in life seem to be lost from the lives of the married couples after a short span of time, enga

through rituals, born from physical desires or selfishness. The daughter-in-law brought after so much fanfare, merry-singing and good-omens in marriage, is being burnt today and family circumstances have reached a divorce like situation. As a result, family breaks, children suffer and there is only despair left. Unfortunately, all this is happening in the Sikh families too. And this is due to the deviation from the Bāṇi Gurū i.e. Gurū's word.

The four circumambulations (Parikarmās) taken around Sṛi Gurū Granth Sāhib are not mere rituals, but are a matter of faith for the Sikh men or women that every step of their life would be put forward, considering Gurū to be the guiding principle in their lives.

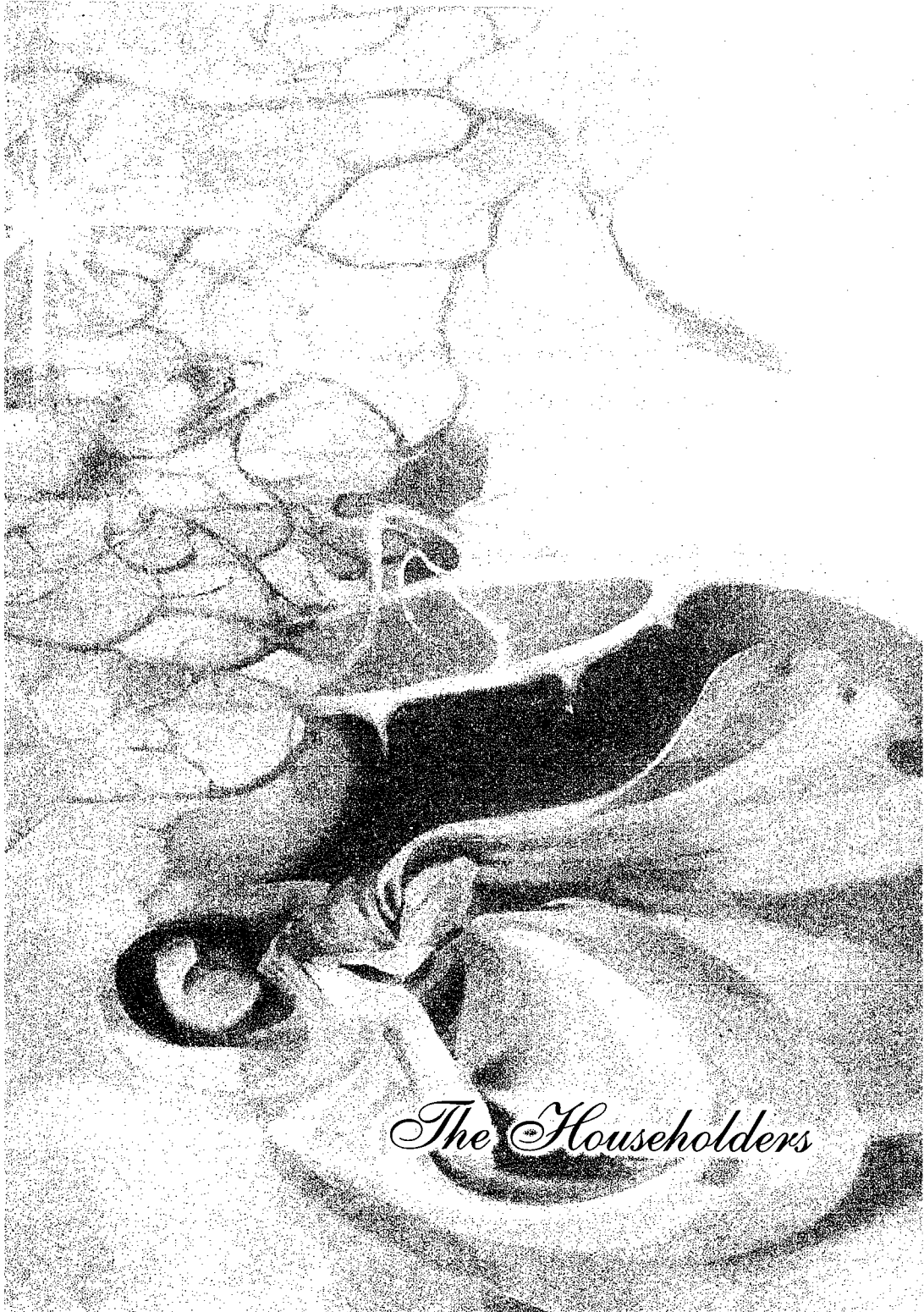
Today, there is an urgent need for the young Sikh generation to understand this blessing of the Gurū. Keeping this in mind, this initiative has been taken so that Gurū's teachings could reach to the young generation through desired media and the frustrated youth engrossed in materialism and physical vices could be safeguarded in the abode of bliss or Anand.

This explanation of Anand Kāraj has been presented to the Saṅgat in the form of cassettes, CD's and book in Panjābī. Now, the effort of Sikh Foundation, in bringing this out in English language, is really commendable. I sincerely hope that with Gurū's blessings, the young generation would link itself with the concept of Anand Kāraj through this book and experience Anand in their lives.

Servant of Gurū Saṅgat,

Darshan Singh Khālsā

Former Jathedār,
Sṛi Akāl Takht Sāhib,
Sṛi Amritsar



The Householders



Iki girahī sevaka sādḥikā gurmatī lāge.
Nāmu dānu isnānu driṛa hari bhagati su jāge.
Gura te daru gharu jāñiai so jāi sinjāñai.
Nānaka nāmu nā vīsarai sāche manu māñai.

Some are householders, servants, and seekers,
attached to the Gurū's Teachings.
They hold fast to the Nām, to charity,
to cleansing and purification;
they remain awake in devotion to the Lord.
Through the Gurū, the Gate of the
Lord's Home is found,
and that place is recognized.
Nānak does not forget the Nām;
his mind has surrendered to the True Lord.
(SGGS pg. 419)



The Householders

Anand Kāraj is the basic ceremony in the life of every Sikh. Before the main rituals of Anand Kāraj, it is important to understand its ambit and the questions related to it.

Why a Sikh has been ordained to become a householder ? Why Sikh has been encouraged to adopt this institution which the people with religious inclination were wary of ? Why Gurū Sāhib has blessed us with such a gift ? One needs to understand all these beforehand.

The Yogīs questioned Gurū Nānak Sāhib about this household (grahist) life :

**Bhekha utāra udāsa dā
vata kion sansārī rīta chalāi.**

How have you put off yogic garb
and attired yourself in a household way.

After this Bhāi Sāhib Bhāi Gurdās Jī says :

**Nānaka ākhe bhangranatha
terī māu kuchajī āi.
Bhāḍā dhoi na jātiona
bhāi kuchaje phula satāi.**

Said Nānak, ‘O’ Bhangar Nāth,
 your mother-teacher is unmannerly.
 She has not cleansed the innerself of your body-pot
 and your clumsy thoughts have burnt your flower
 (of knowledge which was to become fruit).

(Bhāi Gurdās Jī, Vār 1, Pauṛī 40)

If you were born from a knowledgeable mother, then this
 thing of ‘māu kuchajī’ (unmannerly mother-teacher) would have not
 been there; and says further :

**Hoi atīta grihasata taja
 phira unhū ke ghara mangana jāi.**

Bina dite kichha hatha na āi:

You, while distancing and repudiating household life
 go again to those householders for begging.
 Except their offerings you don’t get anything.

(Bhāi Gurdās Jī, Vār 1, Pauṛī 40)

Sikh is a householder, his Gurū is also a householder and his
 God is a householder too.

Grastana mahi tū baḍo grihasatī...

Among householders, You are the Great Householder...

(SGGS pg. 507)

God has been called a Big Householder. But in the mundane
 world, we consider him to be a householder who has his own
 household, who needs an accommodation. On the other hand, a
 yogī or mendicant does not need these things, he spends his life in
 the wilderness of woods or in mountain caves. But a householder
 needs a house to live in and this is his first sign of identification. Its
 second indication is that he has a family and children. One who has
 left his house and family is called a sādḥū, renouncer or sanyāsī. He
 has done so because he thinks there are worries and troubles in the

life of a householder. Further there is a constant need to provide sustenance to the family members.

Thirdly, the worries arise where there are responsibilities. Responsibility gives birth to worries. As the onus of a person keeps on increasing, so do his duties. These three things are inherent in the life of a householder.

Those who wished to escape from these three, they readily left the life of a household. Gurū Sāhib says, 'But when I see the Lord, He is the Biggest Householder of all. Because of His big household and huge family, He has made this big home, the Universe.' As one's family keeps on increasing, one needs to have a bigger house. That's why, the Lord has :

Ihu jagu sachai kī hai koṭhārī...

This world is the house of the True Lord;
The entire world is His house and :

sache kā vichi vāsu.

within it is the dwelling of the True Lord.

(SGGS pg. 463)

His family is very vast :

Tū sājhā sāhibu bāpu hamārā.

Nau nidhi terai akhuṭa bhaṇḍārā.

You are the Universal Father of all,

O my Lord and Master.

Your nine treasures are an inexhaustible storehouse.

(SGGS pg. 97)

He has wealth and treasures too. On the other hand, one who has nothing or leaves the household, material-wealth, is a recluse. God has an enormous household, His family is big and He has heaps of treasures too. But despite all these, He has worries too. If a father of two or three has the worries of their sustenance, maintenance and

studies, then God, who has such a huge family, doesn't He have worries to deal with ? Instead, those who, despite being God's children keep worrying, Gurū Sāhib tells them to understand this :

**Nānaka chintā mati karahu
chintā tisa hī hei.**

**Jala mahi janta upāianu
tinā bhi rojī dei.**

O' Nānak, don't be anxious;
the Lord will take care of you.
He created the creatures in water,
and He gives them their nourishment.

(SGGS pg. 955)

God has the whole ambience of a householder.

**So karatā chintā kare
jini upāiā jagu.**

He, the Creator
who formed the world, cares for it.

(SGGS pg. 467)

The environment of human and God is alike.

If one has to make a relationship with other or has to merge in someone, one has to adopt the other's habits, likings and only then a relationship can be formed.

In the Anand Kāraj, it has been made mandatory for the two beings to be Amritdhārī (baptized). However, this should not be construed to mean that one being should be deprived of this blessing just because the other one is non-Amritdhārī. Every individual has its own prespective.

The intellectuals, scholars and elders made such Sikh Rehat Maryādā (Sikh code of conduct and conventions) for the entire Panth, so that the habits of the two beings resemble and their

environment becomes alike. If such a time comes that one of the two is at a deviation from the Gurū's word, is unable to understand Gurmat, is of an arrogant nature; should the other half keep yearning the entire life for the boon of Amrit ? - No, he or she can partake Amrit. But Panthak code of conduct warrants both beings to be Amritdhārī. As such, this is not the decision taken during Gurū Sāhib's period, as at the time when Bhāi Dayā Singh or Bhāi Dharam Singh (Pañj Piārās) stood to offer their heads, Gurū Sāhib did not tell them to first bring their wives along with them and only then they would be blessed with the Amrit. But this Panthak decision is appropriate and is not to be forgotten. The decision taken by our elderly scholars, should be readily accepted by us as our duty and it helps making our lives comfortable.

This is the need of the time that if the habits of two beings resemble each other, their mind or soul will also be able to become alike. If their habits or ways of living are different, they would be hesitant to share their thoughts and there will be no complete unison in their minds and bodies. They would be never at peace, there will be a demarcation line between them and they will always live in duality. So to make the marriage of Gursikh a 'Anand Kāraj', the oneness of the souls of the two beings is very important.

The union of soul and Lord is akin to this merger of two souls. Merger of self and Lord is the oneness of Nirgun (transcendent) and Sargun (immanent). Sargun is the visible form of Lord and Nirgun is the invisible one, without any shape or form. The form that is :

**Rūpa na rekha na rangū kichhu
trihu guṇa te
prabha bhinna.**

He has no form, no shape, no color;

God is beyond the three qualities.

(SGGS pg. 283)

But He resides in everyone and everywhere :

...sahasa mūrati nanā eka tohī.

...sabha mahi joti joti hai soi.

... You have thousands of forms,
yet You do not have even one.

... Amongst all is the Light -
You are that Light.

(SGGS pg. 13)

The concept of the whole Bāṇī of Gurū Granth Sāhib is to connect this Formless Nirgun with the Immanent Sargun form. One example has been taken to understand this merger. Gurbāṇī is not bound by limitations of time and place. And our relationship with Gurū's word is solely dependent on whether we seek inspiration from it and mould our lives accordingly or not.

Gurū Sāhib has cited an example of husband and wife to raise this life to the sublime standard of the divine merger, to the feelings of the eternal love of God. The most intimate feelings between husband and wife have been used as metaphor to exemplify the exalted state of merger between devotee and the God.

Bhagat Kabīr Jī says in the Bāṇī that a yogī has gone to forests and mountain caves in order to attain the Lord :

Ḍaṇḍā mundrā khinthā ādhārī.

Bhrama kai bhāi bhavai bhekhadhārī.

Āsanu pavanu dūri kari bavare.

Choḍi kapaṭu nita hari bhaju bavare.

Jiha tū jāchahi so tribhavana bhogī.

Kahi Kabīr kesau jagi jogi.

He has a walking stick, ear-rings,

a patched coat and a begging bowl.
 Wearing the robes of a beggar,
 he wanders around, deluded by doubt.
 Abandon your Yogic postures and
 breath control exercises, O' madman.
 Renounce fraud and deception,
 and meditate continuously
 on the Lord, O' madman.
 That which you beg for,
 has been enjoyed in the three worlds.
 Says Kabīr, the Lord is the only Yogī in the world.

(SGGS pg. 857)

But the Lord, whom the yogī wants to attain, is a bhogī, a relisher. He is revelling in the life by residing in each and every being. He is a householder, He has an expansive house, His family is big and He takes care of all. He provides materials and sustenance to everyone like a father. The habits of the Lord do not correspond with those of a yogī. A yogī wanders after renouncing everything whereas God is not a recluse. The habits of yogī do not match with that of the Lord.

Therefore, firstly this is to be understood that to meet the Big Householder, one need not become a renouncer. Gurū Sāhib has also given preference to a householder. Bhāī Gurdās Jī has stated beautifully :

**Jaise macha kacha бага hansa muktā pākhāna
 ammīrita bikhai pragāsa udadhi sai jānīai.**

Like fish, tortoise, heron, swan, jewel is in the water.
 Nectar or poison, all these erupt from the ocean only.

(Bhāī Gurdās Jī, Kabīr 375)

Ocean harbours both fish and tortoise; jewels and stones; herons

and swans; and nectar and poison. Everything is found in the same ocean. One should not discard the ocean thinking that it contains poison, because it is also the source of nectar. Further, Bhāi Sāhib gives one more example :

Bhajana bibidhi jaise hota eka miratakā sai...

Different type of foods are from one soil only....

When body dies, it turns into soil. The body takes birth from the soil and again mixes in the soil. All bodies have been produced from this soil and besides this, all types of food are produced in it. It is the same soil or earth that has produced things meant for eating and wearing. It is the same earth that is providing different forms of countless things. Bhāi Sāhib clarifies one more thing :

**Taise darasana bahu barana āsrama dhrama,
sakala grihasatu kī sākḥā unamāniai.**

Similarly there are many stages of life,
treat all as branches of household only.

All the stages of life are the branches of a household. And a branch takes birth from some kind of root. This means that all religions, faiths, classes, philosophies are the branches of the household. The root behind all these is the same big household.

A recluse, sitting in trance in the dense forests has also taken birth in some household. If a householder had not been there, from where would have these sādḥū-sanyāsīs, yogī-bhagats, king-emperors taken birth ? The origin of all this is the household and all these stages are its branches that have been produced from it.

It is ironical that a branch feels proud of bearing fruits and flowers on it, compares itself with the root and consider it to be nothing. Today in the same manner, a recluse or a sādḥū calls himself to be great and considers a householder inferior as compared

to him. With this illusion of superiority, the sādḥū has created problems in the minds of the householder too.

Today, a householder does not have complete faith and belief in oneself that he can also become great after entering the folds of Gurmat. The only thing needed for this is that the origin of a householder should be healthy and not a diseased one. If the origin or root becomes ill, the branches erupting from it also becomes ill and thus all the leaves, fruits and flowers too are affected. So, all the different ways of living in the world have taken birth from one origin i.e. householder. Further, Bhāi Sāhib states in the next Pauṛī :

**Giānana mai gianu aru
dhiānana mai dhiāna gura
sakala dharama mai
grihasatu pradhānu hai.**

Off all the knowledges and meditations,
Household is the topmost of all righteous ways.

(Bhāi Gurdās Ji, Kabit 376)

That's why it has been ordained that a Sikh has to be a householder. Because God is a householder, Gurū is also a householder and so Sikh, too has to be a householder; as it is the topmost of all righteous ways.

Now what is this marriage ceremony ? This is a doorway to enter the grahist āshram, stage of a householder. Actually the problem arose because the persons who entered this stage, some of them could not recognize it and some were not able to maintain it. Gurū Sāhib have also explained in the Bāṇī from various aspects that the persons who became yogīs, they did not become such as if they were not happy with their households or they found some pleasure in becoming yogīs; instead they were cowards, weak and good-for-nothing fellows and were unemployed, idle and wastrels.

Makhaṭū hoi kai kanna paṛae.
Phakaru kare horu jāti gavāe.
 The lazy unemployed has his ears
 pierced to look like a Yogī.
 Someone else becomes a pan-handler,
 and loses his social status.

(SGGS pg. 1245)

They didn't have the power of 'One who works for what one eats and gives some of what one has'. They disregarded the golden rule of hard earning given by Gurū Nānak and came out of the Gurmat fold laid by the True Gurū. They enjoyed while sitting idle, wore rings in their ears and went from door to door begging for food. And a person who begs, does not get due respect or praise.

Loku dhikāru kahai mangata jana
māgata mānu na pāiā.
 People curse at the beggar;
 by begging, he does not receive honour.

(SGGS pg. 878)

Initially they left their household so that they would not have to earn and eat; and not have to bear the responsibilities of the families. But every person has the needs attached to him. So, these persons had to beg for food and beggars do not ever get respect. Then these people went further and played another trick. They created an illusion that those who have left the household, they are actually great. This was done because people would not then treat them as beggars and rebuke them.

This is the reason behind the hundreds of garbs of *ḍerā* prevailing today. This illusion has been created in the minds of the householders and this guilt too has been produced in them that householder is a sinner. Contrary to it, this feeling has also been

inculcated in them that the renounced ones are great and have attained God. That's why, in today's world, beggars are also given much respect and people bow their heads before them. Though they come for begging but people start bowing before them. If a street beggar arrives at our doorstep, we do not treat him well. But if at the same door, someone arrives wearing a round turban and long robe asking for money, we start bowing before him. This is due to the illusion created among us. But Gurū Nānak Sāhib removes this illusion :

Guru pīra sadac mangaṇa jāi.

Tā kai mūli na lagīai pāi.

One who calls himself a Gurū or a spiritual teacher,
while he goes around begging -
don't ever touch his feet.

(SGGS pg. 1245)

One who calls himself a Pīr, Sādhū, Brahm Giānī, Holy person, Godman and arrives at someone's doorstep for begging, never bow before him. This is the Gurū's decision.

Why a Sikh has to be a householder ? Why he has to reach this stage of householder after entering through this doorway of marriage ? One has to contemplate what is there in this institution of marriage ? On the other hand, those who ran away from it, why did they flee ? And in the world of Gurmat, when does marriage becomes 'Anand Kāraj' and what is attained from this institution ?

These two things are before us :

Iki girahī sevaka sādhiḱā

gurmatī lāge.

Some are householders, servants, and seekers,
attached to the Gurū's Teachings.

From every Shabad of the ceremony of Anand Kāraj, we have to understand the concept of 'Gurmatī lāge' or linking to Gurū teachings. Because this only becomes Anand Kāraj and from this, household becomes home of peace.

Some people started drifting away from this. Instead of entering the household through the doorway of marriage, they started running away from it.

But Gurū Sāhib wants to take us inside this by letting us clasp to the stole of Gurmat. Seeing that the people were running away from this world, He wants to make us understand :

**Ehu visu sansāru tumu dekhade
ehu hari kā rūpu hai
hari rūpu nadarī āiā.**

This whole world which you see
is the image of the Lord;
only the image of the Lord is seen.

(SGGS pg. 92)

If someone is bringing up his child considering him to be his son, he is in some form of attachment. But if one thinks while sustaining the child that God has sent this being and blessed him with this service, he is not nourishing the child as an affection but obeying the duty of service blessed by God. Then the upbringing of the child would also become a devotion. One person sustains his child as an affection while the other considers it to be the service blessed by God.

**Māi bāpa putra
sabhi hari ke kīe.
Sabhanā kau sanbandhu
hari kari diē.**

Mother, father and sons
are all made by the Lord;

the relationships of all
are established by the Lord.

(SGGS pg. 494)

With this transformation of thoughts, the same accomplished work would bear better fruit. It would be with more love as God's pleasure would also be working with it. It would not be mere sustenance in child's affection. God's pleasure would also start flowing with it. And devotion or bhagatī is nothing but attaining the pleasure of God.

Nāmu dānu isanānu driṛu

hari bhagati su jāge.

They hold fast to the Nām, to charity,
to cleansing and purification;

they remain awake in devotion to the Lord.

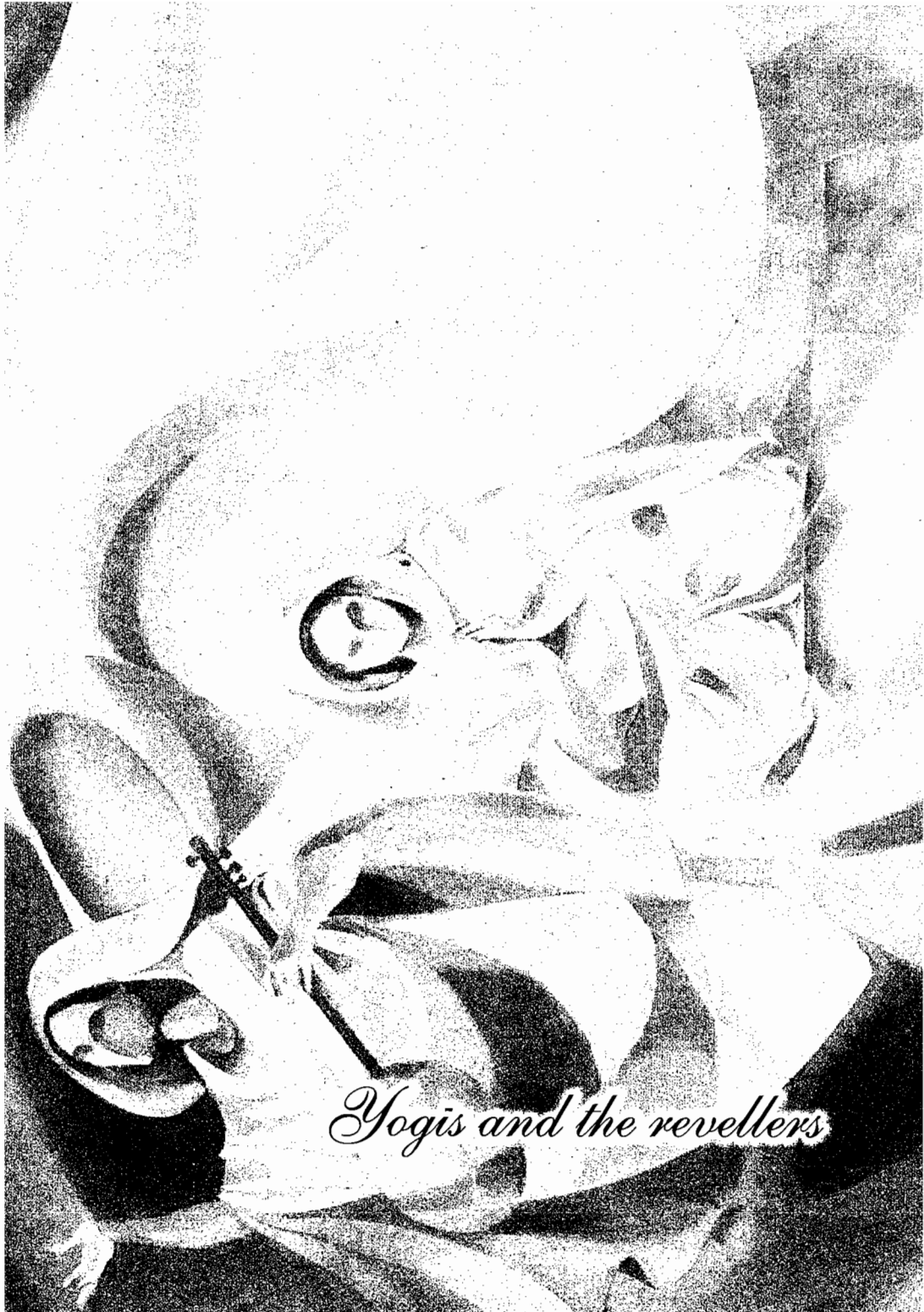
The thing that is acceptable to God, which is done for the God is called devotion or bhagatī. Thus this sustenance of child will also become the devotion.

That's why, Gurū Sāhib wants us to enter this very institution of household from where people use to run, pierce their ears and sit idle. Gurū Sāhib wants us to enter the doorway of 'Anand' or bliss through this marriage ceremony. But this is possible only after being attached to the Gurū's teachings - 'Gurmatī lāge'.

Instead of contemplating only on 'Anand Kāraj', we will try to understand why this marriage has been addressed as 'Anand Kāraj'? What is its importance in the world of Gurmat ? Because we all are related to this stage of life, one way or another. The life of every Sikh is related to this ceremony of Anand Kāraj and one has to pass through this stage in his or her lifetime.

We should know this and feel proud of it that we are householders. Someone should not keep us in dark, create an illusion

and make us subordinates and dependent on him. May Gurū bless us so that we are able to understand and walk firmly on the way shown by the Gurū.



Yogis and the revellers



Jogī bhogī kāpaṛī kiā bhavahi disantara.

Gura kā sabadu na chīnhahī

tatu sāru nīrantara.

Why do the Yogīs, the revellers,
and the beggars wander in foreign lands?

They do not understand the
Word of the Gurū's Shabad,
and the essence of excellence within them.

(SGGS pg. 419)



Yogis and the revellers

In the Bāṇī, the Gurū has placed two aspects simultaneously - Gurmukh and Manmukh. While Gurmukh (Gurū oriented, pious) worships God, a Manmukh (Self oriented, atheist) also worships Him. But then a question arises that one who worships, how is he an atheist ?

Manmukh too performs the worship but he is devoid of Gurū or Shabad. His worship is not acceptable as he does not understand the Gurū's Shabad, does not understand the basic principle of God. Because the main thing is Gurmat.

Manmukha bhagati karahi

binu satigura

vinu satigura bhagati na hoī rāma.

The self-willed manmukhs practice
devotional rituals without the True Gurū,
but without the True Gurū,
there is no devotion.

(SGGS pg. 768)

On the other hand, Gurū Sāhib states :

Gurmukhi hasai gurmukhi rovai.

The Gurmukh laughs, and the Gurmukh cries.
One who is linked with Gurmat, he is acceptable, whether he is laughing or crying.

After all, what is this household, this world ? In this world, there are present both the things - laughing as well as crying. We call him worldly, who laughs as well as cries in his life. But :

**Ji gurmukhi kare
sāi bhagati hovai.**

Whatever the Gurmukh does,
is devotional worship.

(SGGS pg. 1422)

So, for the worship or devotion to be acceptable, the only requirement is Gurmat. For it, one does not have to leave the household, no need of becoming naked sādhus by renouncing clothes, no need of applying ash all over the body and practice austerities while sitting in the forest. Undoubtedly, if one is living as a worldly being or a householder, he has to have a relation with Gurmat.

From here only, starts the concept of Anand Kāraj. Marriage has been in practice in this world for a very long period of time, but not this system of 'Anand Kāraj'. The same word 'Marriage' has been given the name of 'Anand Kāraj'. But why it has been given such a name, this has to be understood.

Though marriages have been taking place in this world and Gurū Sāhib has also talked about marriage in the Bāṇī. But the basic difference is that the world had made this marriage a sorrow and Gurū Sāhib wants to make it a bliss. Because it has to be related with the Gurū, it has to be related to Gurmat, that's why it has to be in accordance with Gurmat :

**Gurū duārai hamarā vīahu ji hoa
jā sahu miliā tā jāniā.**

When I was married within
the Gurdwārā, the Gurū's Door,
I met my Husband Lord,
and I came to know Him.

(SGGS pg. 351)

The main thing to be seen is that despite the marriages being held for centuries, what were the shortcomings or problems due to which people started hating this institution. They started finding an excuse for not accepting the householder way of life, retiring to the forests, wandering at places begging for food and passing their remaining lives in the mountain caves.

Here, I wish to share its other aspect that how Gurmat has transformed this much hated marriage into Anand Kāraj - a ceremony of bliss ?

There were some reasons behind it. The worldly people had described the householder's life as a cause of worries and problems. Gurbāṇī has not left any aspect of life untouched and has beautifully dealt with each and every aspect of life. Gurū Sāhib has narrated this aspect of life, also in the Bāṇī :

**Girasata mahi
chinta udāsa ahankāra.**

Karama karata jia kau janjāra.

In the householder's life, there is anxiety,
and in the life of the renunciate, there is egotism.
Performing religious rituals, the soul is entangled.

(SGGS pg. 385)

Three things work together in the life of a householder - worry, sadness and pride. If hunger arises there is an increase in worry, if

something is gone one feels sad and if something is attained one feels proud of it. The pride finishes mercy and gives rise to cruelty. A proud man does not listen to anybody, he is not moved by anyone's circumstances. This was one of the reasons for household to become subject of hatred. Where there is cruelty and oppression, pride will come automatically, and thus in this male dominated world, he made his life partner his slave. But this life partner was a big progressive need in the way of religion.

Apart from this, one is astonished at another aspect of Gurmat. Bhāi Gurdās Jī states :

Ika sikha dui sādha saṅga

pañjī parmesura.

One is a Sikh, two the congregation
and in five resides God.

(Bhāi Gurdās Jī, Vār 13 Pauṛī 19)

A single being is a Sikh. If two combine, it becomes Sādh Saṅgat. Also, Sādh Saṅgat is of utter importance in the Sikh way of life, as remembering the Name of God in Sādh Saṅgat has been stated to be the only real task. Sādh Saṅgat is a vital subject for a Sikh. If a Sikh settles down in such a city or country where there is no Gurdwārā, there is no other Sikh family, shall he or she remain devoid of Sādh Saṅgat. That's why Gurū Sāhib wants the Sikh to become a householder. As the two beings sit together for reciting the Pāṭh of Rehrās, it becomes Sādh Saṅgat. Because Sādh Saṅgat comprises of two. Also, there is no need of going to any place in search of Sādh Saṅgat.

Being a householder, there becomes a source of earning the God's Name in the house itself. Sādh Saṅgat is created in the house itself. But today this get-together, this life of a householder, this togetherness of husband and wife, this auspicious union has been

made a subject of worries and sadness. Egoism has entered into it and feeling of making the other one slave has developed in this system. But does this make household somewhat inferior or feeble ?

Household is created with the union of the two. If it is bad, it means both are responsible for its nature, both are equally responsible for its bad outcomings. But what is the reason that those who hated and avoided the household system, held only the women responsible for it. The male dominated world has given all the curses and grievances to the women. The renowned scholars of this world have also stated women to be a portrait of deceit and falsehood. Scholars like Tulsīdās have placed it next to animals :

**Ḍhol ganwār shūdra pashū nārī,
ch pācho tāran ke adhikārī.**

Drum, rustic, low-caste, animal, woman -
these five deserve to be rebuked.

Besides this, if today Sikh believes the composition of 'Triā Chritra' (part of so called Dasam Granth) to be composed by the Tenth Master Gurū Gobind Singh Jī, the purpose of 'Anand Kāraj' does not remain as such. The greatness of Anand Kāraj is at once over. In the 'Triā Chritra', much more curses or grouses have been given to women, as compared to the leaders of other religions. Also, it has been proved in it that if a woman appears made wholly of gold, become pious as the river Ganges, still do not ever trust a woman. Is it possible that Gurū Sāhib who wants to make his Sikh a householder and marriage an 'Anand Kāraj', could present such a view ?

Also, the male dominated world placed woman at par with an animal, making it a sign of slavery. It was due to this reason that Gurū Panth has asked the Sikh girls not to pierce their nose and ears as it is indicative of taming animals. Till date, to tie a bull, a nose

string is attached to it and ropes are tied on the ears. It is because these two parts of the body are very sensitive and are such that they cannot bear pain; and an animal could be easily put under control by fastening these two parts. That's why one is prohibited to pierce one's nose and ears in the Sikh way of life because Gurū Sāhib does not want women to be treated as animals and rebuked. This is the reason that in the 'Sikh Rehat Maryādā', in the context of Amrit it is written that when a woman comes to partake Amrit, she should not be wearing nose-ear pierced jewels. This has been done so because Gurū Sāhib does not want women to be slaves and wishes to place her equally in the society.

But on the other hand, after repeatedly calling her inferior, the conscience of woman was made to fall to such an extent that she started accepting the slavery. As a result of this, the parents also started to accept the slavery of their daughter and they started preparing her for living the life of a slave. That's why there were prevailing traditions wherein the elderly folk do not use to give proper diet and education to the girl child. They provided healthy diet and good education to their sons whereas the girls were deprived of it. As a result, the girls remained weak, physically as well as mentally. This helped them to accept their slavery with much ease. The girl child was fully prepared from their parents home only and a fear was imbibed in her that she has to go to another house and live a life of a slave. Their mind was tuned and shaped in such a way before hand.

Gurū Sāhib has stated in the Bāṇī that those who believe marriage to be a case of physical relationship only, for them :

**Kūra miā kūra bibi
khapi hoi khāru.
Kūri kūrai nehu lagā**

visariā kartāru.

False is the husband, false is the wife;
they mourn and waste away.
The false ones love falsehood,
and forget their Creator.

(SGGS pg. 468)

Today, marriage has become a physical bargain. But the physical beauty is not everlasting and after a period of time, there starts a fissure in the relationship and such relationship proves out to be false. Here, the false one had formed a relationship with falsehood. The physical bodies of husband and wife - both are false. Gurū Tegh Bahādar Sāhib has stated in the Bāṇī :

Sādho chu tanu mithiā jānau.

O' Holy Saints, know that this body is false.

(SGGS pg. 1186)

This physical body is an illusion and the relationship of one body with another has to be an illusion too and so its end result has to be a tragic one, full of sorrows and unfaithfulness. The union of two physical bodies cannot bear any long lasting happiness, it has to be short lived. This is a meager pleasure that diminishes in a moment.

Binasi jāi jo nimakha mahi

so alap sukhu bhanīai.

That pleasure, which passes away
in an instant, is trivial.

(SGGS pg. 677)

But Gurū Sāhib has unfolded one more mystery in the Bāṇī. In this false body, resides one True Lord.

Yā bhītari jo rāmu basatu hai

sācho tāhi pachāno.

The Lord who dwells within it -
recognize that He alone is real.

(SGGS pg. 1186)

This is the relationship with truth, which the Gurū teaches us. Now one has to relate with the Lord residing in the inner self and not merely with the physical body. If the husband sees God in his wife and wife identifies the God residing in her husband, the faithfulness will start from there itself. And when the husband insults his wife, he realizes that he is insulting the God inside her. Also, if the wife is disloyal to her husband, she realizes that she is being disloyal to her God. If such happens, neither the husband could say false things to his wife nor wife could speak false to her husband. From here starts the sanctity of the relationship.

In today's society, there is a big need of putting this theory of Gurmat in the minds of the young generation. Nowadays, relationships are becoming unsuccessful in our society and we are also facing this tragedy.

In Gurmat, there is only union, only Anand Kāraj and there is no place of divorce in it. But still, it has entered into many of our families. It is right for those people to go to the court for divorce who get their marriages registered in court. But who has performed Anand Kāraj in the benign presence of Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib, how can he or she deny this relationship. As such he or she cannot have a divorce because Gurmat is the world of union only. These shortcomings have entered in our families too, because we are not being attached with Gurmat.

Dhana pira chi na
ākhiani bahani ikathe hoi.
Eka jotī dui mūrati
dhana piru kahiai soi.

They are not said to be husband and wife,
who merely sit together.

They alone are called husband and wife,
who have one light in two bodies (idols).

(SGGS pg. 788)

An idol or statue or mūrti is of the physical body. That's why when the word 'mūrti' or idol is used, it has been stated that two bodies cannot unite to form an idol and hence 'dui mūrti' or two idols. Although they appear to be two bodies - husband and wife, but if the two souls within them become one, that is real marriage. When one reaches unto this level of marriage, all its inner disloyalties come to an end. Then woman ceases to be a mere thing that can be moved in either direction.

Man had made woman a mere object in this world. He used to give her away as charity like many other objects. That's why, those people use to call this ritual 'Kanyā Dān' (Donation of a girl) as it could be donated to anyone. As a result of it, like other commodities, women were also being given in bounty.

**Asu dāna gaja dāna
sihajā nārī bhūmi dāna
aiso dānu nita nitahi kijai.**

Someone may give away horses and elephants,
or women on their beds, or land;
he may give such gifts over and over again.

(SGGS pg. 973)

Besides this, one used to forcibly take away woman from one another like other objects. The ritual of 'Swayamwar' is also the same. It is a ritual where a person wins a woman by demonstrating his act of courage. One who is successful by his force, wins over it, he is declared victorious - 'Jai' and the girl puts a 'Mālā' (garland) of

‘Jai’ (victory) around the person’s neck, despite he being good or bad. This is the real concept of ‘Jai Mālā’ (garland of victory), which has to be understood. If Rāvaṇa had broken the bow in ‘Swayamwar’, Sītā would have been in the house of Lankā king Rāvaṇa and not Srī Rāmachandra.

We come to know about the status and value of women in society from the mythology. Arjun also wins over Draupadī in a ‘Swayamwar’ by shooting an arrow in the fish’s eye. Further, the writer states that after winning over he reaches home late in the night and his mother is resting in her room. The son was enthusiastic about narrating his tale of victory to his mother. He stood at the door and requests her to open the door and see what he has brought. The mother naively replies that she will not open the door at this hour of night and whatever he has brought, he should share it with all his brothers. So, they were five brothers and Draupadī became ‘Panchālī’ - the wife of five. As being an object, she herself could not make a decision, could not express her feelings. Further more, when the righteous son Yudhisṭhira loses Panchālī, the five Pāṇḍavas merely watch Draupadī being dishonoured in front of the whole gathering. Because they have lost the object i.e. Draupadī in the game, they silently watch the entire episode as mute spectators. Also, the object that has been lost does not have the right to question the husband. This was the status of women in the society.

Gurmat emancipated women from this world of humiliation and stated that it is the marriage of the souls and not of two bodies. This is not a mere union of two physical bodies, as bodies are just an illusion and mansion erected on illusions can never last for long. Mansion erected on selfishness and cruelty cannot last, it has to fall one day or the other. Seeing this failure, some people started hating

this institution of household.

Gurū Sāhib said, I wish to erect this institution on the basis of truth so that bliss can be attained in it. But the prescribed way for it is that the householder attaches himself with Gurmat.

The life of a Sikh is like two banks of a river. On one side there is Will or Hukam and on the other end is blessings or Kirpā. If one attains something, he should not feel proud of it, rather he should realize it as His blessings and believe His Order to be true. Hukam or Order has been bestowed upon a Sikh by Gurū Nānak Sāhib, as the foremost guideline. When a Sikh comes in the periphery of Hukam, as instructed in Gurmat, he gets rid of the biggest tragedy of the householder i.e. worry, sadness and pride cease to exist. When these three things are eradicated from the life of a householder, only Anand or bliss remains which is attained through Gurmat.

That's why, the families entering the sphere of Gurmat should very well know that here, marriage is the name of giving recognition to one-another. Here, there is no 'Jai Mālā' that he has won and she has garlanded him. Instead here, girl should be bold enough to say that she is not a sign of slavery, she doesn't want to follow the ritual even if someone in the family insists on performing this ritual. There is absolutely no place of 'Jai Mālā' in the Sikh society. Instead, here :

Jo dila miliā su mili rahiā
miliā kahiaī re soi.

Je bahuterā lochiāī bātī melu na hoī.
She who meets her Beloved in her heart,
remains united with Him;
this is truly called union.
As much as she may long for Him,

she shall not meet Him through mere words.

(SGGS pg.725)

There is a union of two souls, communion of ideologies. This only becomes the bliss or Anand of the life.

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a baby in a cradleboard, surrounded by draped fabric. The baby is lying in a cradleboard, which is positioned in the center of the frame. The cradleboard is a traditional wooden carrier, and the baby is wrapped in a blanket. The baby's face is visible, and they appear to be looking towards the camera. The cradleboard is surrounded by large, draped pieces of fabric, possibly a blanket or a shawl, which are gathered around the baby. The fabric has a textured, slightly wrinkled appearance. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, creating a sense of depth and texture. The overall composition is centered and balanced, with the baby as the focal point.

Arrival of Bridegroom's family



Sat santokh kari bhāu
 kuṛamu kuṛamāi āiā bali rām jīo.
 Sant jana kari melu gurbāṇī gavāiā bali rām jīu.
 Bāṇī gura gāi parama gati pāi pancha mile sohāiā.
 Gaiā karodhu mamatā tani
 nāṭhī pākhanḍu bharamu gavāiā.
 Haumai pīra gāi sukhu pāiā ārogata bhae sarirā.
 Gura parsādi brahmu pachhātā Nānaka guṇī gahīrā.

The soul-bride is lovingly embellished with truth and
 contentment; her Father, the Gurū,
 has come to engage her
 in marriage to her Husband Lord.
 Joining with the humble Saints, I sing Gurbāṇī.
 Singing the Gurū's Bāṇī,
 I have obtained the supreme status;
 meeting with the Saints, the self-elect,
 I am blessed and adorned.
 Anger and attachment have left my body and run away;
 I have eradicated hypocrisy and doubt.
 The pain of egotism is gone, and I have found peace;
 my body has become healthy and free of disease.
 By Gurū's Grace, O' Nānaka, I have realized God,
 the ocean of virtue.

(SGGS pg. 773)



Arrival of Bridegroom's family

The foremost function of the marriage ceremony is **Kuṛmāi** or engagement, which has been mentioned in **Gurbāṇī** also. So it is important to contemplate upon it.

The **Bāṇī** of **Gurū Granth Sāhib** is the environment of the ideal surroundings of the Lord. It is the description of His form and attributes. Bliss is attained when one enters the environment of the Almighty One.

Gurū Granth Sāhib calls the world full of sorrows as false, an illusion and a magic show. But the task of **Gurū** is to transform the false into truth. And how will it be transformed? It will be transformed by the means of grafting - grafting this false world with the scion of **Gurmat**, so that the taste of falsehood diminishes from it. When one plant is grafted with another one, everything changes - its taste, colour, form and shape. Similarly, if the world is grafted with truth, the taste of the world would change; its character and form would be transformed. **Bābā Kabīr Jī** also gave the same thought in the **Bāṇī** :

Gaṅgā kai saṅgi salitā bigarī.

So salitā gangā hoi nibarī.

When the stream flows into the Ganges,
then it becomes the Ganges.

(SGGS pg. 1158)

Although he was born in this world and was part of this creation only, but was transformed due to the grafting.

Gurū is the gardener who performs the grafting of this world full of falsehood with truth. He grafts the world with the Lord and links it to Him. Gurū is the mediator.

We have to make our lives blissful or in 'Anand' from the inspiration of the communion of soul and Lord, which has been made possible by the Gurū. Previously, many have called this world an illusion but Gurū grafts the very same world with the Lord. In this world household is an institution, a stage that was believed to be an abode of worries and many people were renouncing it. Gurū Sāhib blessed the same household and grafted it with the eternal truth or virtues. And now that very household becomes 'Anand Kāraj', a task of bliss. But this inspiration comes from the guidance of the union of world and God, soul and Lord.

Today scientists discover one thing from another. They repeatedly perform experiments to see that if such can happen, why not this can occur and thus get inspired. We also have to take inspiration from the Gurū in the same way. If the world can become an abode of bliss, it can become the form of Lord with the guidance of the Gurū; how come this household cannot become 'Anand', which has been called hell and an obstacle in the way of God. It can very well be transformed to Anand. But for this inspiration, we need Gurū as the mediator.

Satu santokhu kari bhāu

kuṛamu kuṛamāi āiā bali rām jio.

The soul-bride is lovingly embellished with
truth and contentment;

her Father, the Gurū, has come to engage her
in marriage to her Husband Lord.

The word 'Kuṛam' has been derived from kuṛamb, family and in the western Punjāb it was also called 'Kormā' meaning family, kins, kinsfolk. From this word, a thing of subtle importance has arisen. It means that to form a relation, there is a need of mother, father and the family. But in today's world, young generation has completely forgotten this. They generally say that they can take their own decisions; and those who had nourished and sustained them, why those elders should come in the way of their decisions. There is a vital need of understanding this subtle thing.

Man is a story of the combination of soul and the Supreme Being. But man cannot himself decide how he can meet the Supreme One. It is the Guru who makes this decision; and who is the Gurū ?

Shabad Gurū is the father-mother for the union with God - 'Guradeva mātā guradeva pitā' - Gurū is our family. In this world of relations, our mother-father is our Gurū. The decision taken by the parents with the experience of their lives will be for our benefit and our immature decisions are nothing compared to it. Although there is much fervour and zeal in today's youth, but not much intellect. Youth are very commonly told repeatedly to work sensibly and not with mere enthusiasm only. In the Bāṇī also, much has been said about this second stage of life i.e. youth :

**Dūje paharai rainī ke vaṇajāriā mitrā
bhari juānī laharī dei.**

In the second watch of the night,

O' my merchant friend,
the fullness of youth rises in you like waves.

(SGGS pg.77)

Life of youth is like the waves, which after breaking the barriers, become flood like and destroys everything. They do not realize the good or bad about their future.

**Burā bhalā na pachhāṇāi vaṇajārīā mitrā
manu matā ahanmei.**

You do not distinguish between good and evil,
O' my merchant friend -
your mind is intoxicated with ego.

(SGGS pg. 77)

Every young one should understand the social aspects in the light of Gurbāṇī. In this young age, mind is filled with pride and person is self-absorbed. He or she cannot think about the good or bad of self or family. In today's society also, we generally see that many relationships that have been created against the wishes of the parents, they are not able to walk together a few steps in life and afterwards the decision has to be altered; the only thing left is the repentance. This generally happens because parents and in-laws do not join in for the engagement and children take their own decisions.

At this young age, boy or girl does not realize how many obstacles are there in the future and to deal with these obstacles, the right path that the family can choose, the Gurū can choose, they themselves cannot choose on their own.

Marriage is not a relationship for a day or two, nor it is a decision meant for a couple of days. This is a choice meant for the long journey of life i.e. to live the next stage of life, and so how should the life partner be for this journey. Today, the tragedies of

divorce are common because the decision for choosing the life partner is being made in haste or in the zeal of the young generation.

There is a sense of feeling and philosophy behind these words 'Kūṛam Kūṛamāi'. For the union of bride and bridegroom, initially the families of the two sit together. Now in this world of Gurmat, family is the Gurū. Gurū is the mother-father of this being. So the two families sit together and they have to make a decision by seating the Gurū amidst them and by singing Gurbāṇī. Also, for this occasion, they bring things - truth and contentment, to exchange with each other and this gives rise to love. An engagement ceremony is performed in such a manner i.e. with the exchange of truth and contentment.

Where there is no truth, no faith on each other and no contentment, how can there be love between them? Instead there will be the feeling of snatching from one another, greed of taking more and more, and this is what we call 'dowry'. All the happiness of today's world is being sacrificed for this dowry system. This is due to the fact that the hunger and yearning for materialistic things are on a rise. This hunger has very well entered the Sikh families too; although Gurū Sāhib eliminated this hunger from the life of a Sikh. From the hunger, arise the feelings of enmity, opposition and hatred. Love will arise only after exhaustion of this hunger. Union and love emanate from truth and contentment; and not from the hunger.

Gurū Sāhib has made truth and contentment the base of the religion. A Sikh was also blessed with these gifts :

**Thāla vichi tinni vasatū paio
satu santokhu vichāro.**

Upon this Plate, three things have been placed :

Truth, Contentment and Contemplation.

(SGGS pg.1429)

It has been ordained in the Bāṇī that God does not associate Himself with those affairs that are devoid of truth and contentment. Gurū only associates Himself with those affairs where there is truth and contentment.

**Āpaṇā kārāji āpi savāre
horani kārāju na hoī.**

He Himself arranges His own affairs;
His affairs cannot be arranged by anyone else.

(SGGS pg.351)

But which type of affair, task or function?

**Jitu kārāji satu santokhu daiā dharamu hai
guramukhi būjhai koī.**

By the affair of this marriage,
truth, contentment, mercy and faith are produced;
but how rare is that Gurmukh who understands it!

(SGGS pg. 351)

Gurū does not associate Himself with the affair where there is no truth, contentment and compassion. And if Gurū does not reside in this ceremony, how will we be able to say :

**Gurū duārai hamarā viāhu ji hoā
jā sahu miliā tā jāniā.**

When I was married within
the Gurdwārā, the Gurū's Door,
I met my Husband Lord,
and I came to know Him.

(SGGS pg. 351)

Gurū has to transform this marriage into Anand Kārāj. That's why hunger has to be eradicated and truth and contentment to be

inculcated. Then it will become ‘Anand Kāraj’.

Let us ask ourselves that how many marriages have been conducted in our families with ingrediants of truth and contentment. With this introspection, we will be able to identify the hurdles and pitfalls in our way of life.

Satu santokha hovai ardāsi.

Tā suṇi sadi bahāle pāsi.

If a prayer is offered with truth and contentment,
the Lord will hear it, and call him in to sit by Him.

(SGGS pg.878)

Ardās or prayer will be accepted only if it is performed with the feeling of truth and contentment. The relation with the God will be formed if it is full of these two virtues. Gurū will also shower His blessings in our affair if it is in the spirit of truth and contentment.

Engagement ceremony has a special purpose. It is meant to unite the two families, as it makes the two families one. But we see in our daily lives that after a short span of time, the families do not remain together. The reason behind this is that initially they don't have truth and contentment; and as a result, there is no love. That's why :

Gaiā karodhu mamatā tani nāṭhi

pākhandu bharamu gavāiā.

Anger and attachment have left my body and run away;
I have eradicated hypocrisy and doubt.

‘Mamta’ word is indicative of attachment. There is a huge difference between attachment and love. Though we think these two to be same, but this is not the case. Attachment is a fault and it is one of the five vices - lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride. On the other hand, love is a virtue. Although both are meant for the union,

both can be linked to anything; but there is a subtle difference between the two. We have to understand this difference.

Man is linked with someone due to attachment and he says, this is my family, my car, my house. He even goes to an extent of saying that this is my Gurdwārā, my God. But when he falls in love, his inner self is transformed, he says, O' God ! I am yours. Although this is also a form of linking with someone, but the feeling of attachment does not remain.

Attachment means fixation or hold; while love is dedication or surrender. Attachment is to hold someone while love means to surrender before someone. Gurū Sāhib has explained these two terms in a single line of Gurbānī :

**Jau hama bādhe moha phāsa
hama prema badhani tuma bādhe.
Apāne chhūṭana ko jatanu karahu
ham chhūṭe tuma ārādhe.**

If I am bound by the noose of emotional attachment,
then I shall bind You, Lord, with the bonds of love.

Go ahead and try to escape, Lord;

I have escaped by worshipping and adoring You.

(SGGS pg. 658)

O' my God ! You have fettered me to this world, these are the clutches of attachment. But my bonding with you is not that of attachment, it is of love. This relation of love is very strong and it never breaks. The relationships that break are not laced with love, but are products of attachment.

Gurū has blessed us with this guidance that the match has to be first fixed by the families - in physical as well as spiritual level. But what is the difference between the two ?

Match is fixed with the Lord, when Gurū is the family and

He is the mother-father. Relationship with the Lord is established only when Gurū is our family, our parents. The worldly being also prays for this guidance :

Mohi duhāgani āpi sīgārī.

Rūpa ranga de nāmi savārī.

Miṭhio dukhu aru sagala santāpa.

Gura hoe mere māi bāpa.

I was discarded and abandoned,
but He has embellished me.

He has blessed me with beauty and His Love;
through His Name, I am exalted.

All my pains and sorrows have been eradicated.

The Gurū has become my Mother and Father.

(SGGS pg. 1143)

Soul has to proceed to in-law's place, the other world. In this world, Gurū is the mother-father of the soul. Gurū has to sustain, maintain and adore the soul. As every parent adorns his or her daughter with the virtues so that she may reside in peace at her in-law's place, similarly Gurū also decorates every soul, every human being with the virtues. What is the outcome of it; Gurū Sāhib explains it in the next line :

Sakhī saherī merai grasati ananda.

Kari kirapā bheṭe mohi kanta.

O my friends and companions,
my household is in bliss.

Granting His Grace,
my Husband Lord has met me.

(SGGS pg. 1143)

When Gurū becomes the mother-father, He has to fix the match, He has to make the decision, He has to give the guidance,

He has to adorn the being with the virtues and the household of such a being becomes 'Anand Kāraj'. There is bliss in the life and the household becomes an abode of bliss.

We have to seek the inspiration from this example in our worldly life, so that the world can be grafted by the Supreme Being and the worries transform into happiness. It has to be such that the young generation must know that they don't have to take any such decisions under the influence of any emotion or enthusiasm; and the parents can think better than them. And those who have brought them up, nourished and educated them against all odds, are not their enemies. They should know that marriage starts with coming together of the two families.

But the families should also know that they have to take along with them truth and contentment, rather than a list of demands regarding dowry and varieties of dishes for the marriage party. Instead, they should carry the love derived from truth and contentment. Then only the match becomes life long and the marriage becomes Anand Kāraj.

Also, there should be gathering of good and pious people :

Santa janā kari melu

gurabānī gavāīā bali rāma jiu.

Joining with the humble Saints, I sing Gurbānī.

Because good people always think good, they don't have the thoughts of alien pleasure in their minds. So, there should be a gathering of Sādh-Saṅgat and Gurbānī should be sung. This singing of Gurbānī will result in :

Bānī gura gāi parama gati pāi

pancha mile sohāīā.

Singing the Gurū's Bānī,

I have obtained the supreme status;

meeting with the Saints, the self-elect,

I am blessed and adorned.

All the five sense organs will be unified, the thoughts will not differ and a feeling of brotherhood would prevail at a physical level. One looks upon the brotherhood, as to how big is his or her social status, how big is the sphere of relatives and how much love one has for the society.

But one who is not able to distribute love within his or her family circle, how can he or she be expected to give love to the world ? Given the intimacy and closeness of the relationship of marriage, if one cannot get along well with his in-laws, how can one be expected to be cordial and friendly to one's neighbour. Thus love plays a very significant role in building and nurturing relationships.

Gaiā karodhu mamatā tani nāṭhi

pākhaṇḍu bharamu gavāiā.

Anger and attachment have left my body and run away;

I have eradicated hypocrisy and doubt.

These two - anger and affection are things that cause separation. Affection is a transformed form of attachment. It produces pretence, illusions and fallacy. When pretence is eliminated, truth is revealed and illusion also diminishes; and life becomes transparent. In this transparent life, the inner truth is revealed on the face and there remains no pretence or show.

Today, there is plenty of show and display among the in-laws in marriage and truth has taken a back seat. Man is falling into many types of hardships and traps by spending beyond his means. Once you spend more than what you have in your pocket, the other party, not having contentment in them, assumes that you have plenty of wealth; though you may have nothing left and are full of debts due to over-expenditure in the marriage. From here, starts the

illusion. The other party thinks you have spent lavishly on the function and you possess a lot. So they demand more and the agony starts. This is all due to the lack of truth and contentment.

When truth and contentment prevail, guidance from Gurbāṇī is sought, these illusions are removed from in-between and there is no ego left; as all this show and ostentation arise from one's ego only. One indulges in this make-believe business because of his or her ego as he or she should not be considered inferior to the neighbour. One indulges in spending much more than what the neighbour had spent in their marriage; although they may be in heavy debts after all this. All this is being done for the fulfillment of the inner ego. And while living in ego, the life becomes a diseased one. Gurū Sāhib has called ego a very big disease and such a diseased person :

**Roge maratā roge janame.
Roge phiri phiri jonī bharamē.**

In disease the mortals die,
and in disease they are born.

In disease they wander
in reincarnation again and again.

(SGGS pg. 1140)

The diseased person wanders day and night, not having any rest or happiness. Ego is the cause of the majority of pains and sufferings in the world. But when one enters the ambit of Gurmat and takes the guidance from the Gurū :

**Haumai pīra gaī sukhu pāiā
ārogata bhae sarīrā.**

The pain of egotism is gone, and I have found peace;
my body has become healthy and free of disease.

No show, ostentation or pretence is left.

Whereas these things are crucial to make this world a better lot; they are also important for the union of soul and the Lord. There should be no pretence, greed, showy affairs or ego between the two. There is no question of union till the ego is vanquished.

**Hau hau bhīti bhaio hai bīcho
sunata desi nikaṭāio.**

The wall of egotism and pride separates us,
but I can hear Him nearby.

(SGGS pg.624)

The wall separating the human being from God, wall amidst the two, is of ego only. God is very near but there is a curtain of ego between the human being and Him. All these things happen in the life of a householder too. If falsehood and deceit enter the house, the husband-wife while living together in the same house are far apart from each other and their personal relationship suffers a lot.

Seja ek pai milanu duherā.

They lie upon the one bed,
but their union is difficult.

(SGGS pg. 483)

The ideologies of the two souls clash due to ego. But when they live in accordance with the Gurmat and seek the guidance of the Gurū :

**Haumai pīra gaī sukhu pāiā
ārogata bhae sarīrā.**

The pain of egotism is gone, and I have found peace;
my body has become healthy and free of disease.

The practical lives are transformed altogether and it becomes the Anand Kāraj.

So, Gurū is our family, our in-laws and it is He who makes the match for the marriage of the soul with the Lord. If the Gurū is

not there in between, the soul cannot tie the knot with the Supreme Being. This all is possible with the grace or blessings of the Gurū only.

Gura parasādi brahamu pachhātā

Nānaka guṇī gahīrā.

By Gurū's Grace, O' Nānak,

I have realized God, the ocean of virtue.

Gurū arrives upon the decision of this union with His own perception and experience. There is an awakening and enlightenment in His decision, while our self-made decisions are full of enthusiasm only. That's why, leave the decision of your life on Him and this is the secret of 'Anand' in life.



Wishing an accomplished task



Paurī.

Kitā loṛīai kammu su hari pahi ākhiai.
Kāraju dei savāri satgura sachu sākhiāi.
Santā saṅgi nidhānu ammrītu chākhiāi.
Bhai bhanjana miharvāna dās kī rākhiāi.
Nānak hari guṇa gāi alakhu prabhu lākhiāi.

Whatever work you wish to accomplish -
tell it to the Lord.
He will resolve your affairs;
the True Gurū gives His Guarantee of Truth.
In the Society of the Saints,
you shall taste the treasure of the Ambrosial Nectar.
The Lord is the Merciful Destroyer of fear;
He preserves and protects His slaves.
O Nānak, sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord,
and see the Unseen Lord God.

(SGGS pg. 91)



Wishing an accomplished task

All human beings have different destinies. However there is one aspect that is common among all the humans. Though there may be many children in the same family born to the same parents, but still their destiny is different from each other. Among them, one may become highly educated and others may remain mediocre, or one may become rich and others remain poor. But still among all of them, one thing remains common :

Sagaliā bhau likhiā siri lekh.

God has inscribed the Inscription of
His Fear upon the heads of all.

(SGGS pg. 464)

The common aspect is fear !

Each and every step taken by man is under an influence of some fear and this is the tale of the whole world. Man wants to shed this fear and is engaged in getting rid of this fear his entire life. He is constantly in the grip of fear; like in order to remain away from disease, he eats proper diet, takes the precaution of boiling the water before drinking, wears proper clothes according to the season. This way, entire period of man's life is in some kind of fear.

From birth till death, he is always trying to safeguard and

protect his life. If he goes on a journey, he is worried by the obstacles on the way and if he is indoors, he tries to lock all the doors from inside. He is always surrounded by fear in one form or the other. He is always in a bid to free himself from these fears and become fearless.

There are only two types in this world - fear and fearless.

Nānaka nirbhau nirankāru sachu eku.

O Nānak, the Fearless Lord, the Formless Lord,
the True Lord, is One.

(SGGS pg. 464)

There is only one Lord who is fearless.

The Gurū now does the grafting and links the world with the Lord. Gurū wants that if the Lord is fearless, this world should also be fearless.

Ohu abināsī rāiā.

Nirabhau saṅgi tumārai basate

chu ḍaranu kahā te āiā.

He is the Eternal King.

The Fearless Lord abides with you.

So where does this fear come from?

(SGGS pg. 206)

O' God ! You are Indestructible, You are Fearless and those who live with You, fear never comes near them. The Lord is there to eliminate the fear.

Bhai bhanjana miharvāna

dāsa kī rākhīai.

The Lord is the Merciful Destroyer of fear;

He preserves and protects His slaves.

The fear of man is eradicated after being grafted or linked with God.

**Kītā loṛīai kammu
su hari pai ākhīai.**

Whatever work you wish to accomplish -
tell it to the Lord.

This prayer in the form of Shabad is mostly sung at the time of Anand Kāraj. This is the 'Ardās' or prayer recited before starting the ceremony of Anand Kāraj, as every task of a Sikh has to be started with the Ardās or prayer. After performing the Ardās, all the worries and fears of a Sikh are eliminated.

Ardās is the source and power to become fearless. Ardās is the biggest potential blessed upon a Sikh by the Gurū.

After this Ardās or Shabad, before starting the ceremony of Anand Kāraj, Hukamnāmā or Order is taken from Gurū Granth Sāhib and then the ritual of holding the pallā or stole is to be performed. All this has to be done prior to the beginning of Anand Kāraj. According to the Sikh Rehat Maryādā, there are only four Lāvās in the Anand Kāraj. It is also written, that a Sikh has to perform Ardās before the start of every task. The all-powerful Gurū then bestows His blessings upon him :

Samaratha gurū siri hathu dharyu.

Guri kīnī kripā hari nāmu diau

jisu dekhi charanna aghanna haryu.

The All-powerful Gurū placed

His hand upon my head.

The Gurū was kind,

and blessed me with the Lord's Name.

(SGGS pg. 1400)

Gurū gives a tool in the form of Ardās, so as to start meditating upon the Fearless Lord and get linked with Him. And death is also afraid of the person who gets linked to Him.

Nisi bāsura eka samāna dhīāna su
nāma sune sutu bhāna ḍaryu.

Night and day, the Gurū meditates
on the One Lord; hearing His Name,
the Messenger of Death is scared away.

(SGGS pg. 1400)

According to the Shāstras (Hindū scriptures), death has been called the son of Bhān or sun. The person who is in union with God, why should he be afraid of this messenger of death or bhān. No one can put any obstacle in his way of life and there is no effect of evil or ill-star (grih) upon him.

What are these stars and how do they change ? These stars change according to the movement of the sun. That's why the writers of Shāstras, state according to their Brāhminical ideology that changing of every star has its own effect in every turn of life. According to them, some stars are very bad or ill, and if those enter in someone's house or life, his or her time changes with the form of the stars and none of his or her task is accomplished. The biggest trick played by the Brāhmins was that they never let the society receive education. They kept the centers of education under their control and produced fear, superstitions and delusions in the society. As a result, common man started looking upon the Brāhmins for each and every task in his life. Before performing any kind of task, he started seeking Brāhmin's advice for the auspicious time. The Brāhmin told the time according to the movement of the stars and after thoroughly studying the horoscope and almanac. He would tell the common man that a particular star has entered his life and it can cause huge obstacles. His advice was to wait till the particular star leaves its place or otherwise to get rid of its ill effects and for the sake of the star, have some worship, recitation etc. performed, done by the Brāhmin only.

This way, a common man in the Indian society got trapped in superstitions and started to fear the stars. But Gurbānī says :

Garaha nivāre satigurū

de āpaṇā nāu.

Bestowing His Name,
the True Gurū removes the evil omens.

(SGGS pg. 400)

And

Nirabhau japai

sagala bhau miṭai.

Meditating on the Fearless Lord,
all fears depart.

(SGGS pg. 293)

All the fears in the world, whether it be of any star or death, get eliminated as one links with the Lord.

On one hand, Sikh performs Ardās before the start of the Anand Kāraj :

Kitā loṛiai kammu

su hari pai ākhiai.

Whatever work you wish to accomplish -
tell it to the Lord.

Satgurū listens to the prayer of the Sikh and the task is accomplished by His Grace :

Kāraj de savāri

satgura sachu sākhiai.

He will resolve your affairs;
the True Gurū gives His Guarantee of Truth.

And still if he consults the Pandit or Brāhmin for the stars and auspicious time for the marriage, it means he does not have any faith

in his Gurū. He is not linked to the Gurū, he has the wavering or in between thought, not high nor low :

Antari agiānu bhāi mati madhima

satigura kī paratitī nāhī.

He has spiritual ignorance within,
and his intellect is dull and dim;
he does not place his faith in the True Gurū.

(SGGS pg. 652)

If one does not have a Gurū and does not share anything with the Gurū, he is Nigurā or without the Gurū. If one has never visited a Gurdwārā and has not adopted Gurū's words, he is believed to be of low thoughts. On the other hand, if someone listens to the Gurū's words, understands them and lives his life based on the Gurū's thoughts, he is said to possess high thoughts. But here, Gurū Sāhib says, he is standing half way between the two thoughts. He bows before the Gurū, calls himself a Sikh, performs the Ardās but does not have faith in his Gurū. This is called mediocre thoughts. A Sikh going to the Pandit asking for stars and an auspicious time for the marriage, is not a Gurū's Sikh. Instead, he possesses thoughts of medium nature and is standing half-way between the two. He is engulfed in such thoughts all the time. Even at the time of doing the Parkāsh of Gurū Granth Sāhib at his home the so-called Sikh thinks to this extent that some or the other star should not cause any ill-effect, so the Parkāsh of Gurū Granth Sāhib should be done facing a particular direction and not the other way. Such people do have the Gurū, but not the faith. They perform their marriage rituals after matching the horoscopes, consulting the almanacs and seeking advice from the Pandits. Before this Shabad c Lāvā, Gurū Sāhib has stated clearly about the study of horoscopes in the same Sūhī rāg only :

**Āiā laganu gaṇai hiradai
dhana omāhiā bali rāma jiu.**

**Panḍita pādhe āṇi
patī bahi vāchāiā bali rāma jiu.**

Calculating the most auspicious moment,
the Lord comes into the bride's home;
her heart is filled with ecstasy.

The Panḍits and astrologers have come,
to sit and consult the almanacs.

(SGGS pg. 773)

The need is to realize the significance of the Panḍit indicated here. Gurū Sāhib tells us that one does not become a Panḍit after taking birth in the house of a Brāhmin. Instead, every Sikh can become a Panḍit :

So panḍitu jo manu parabodhai.

Rāma nāmu ātama mahi sodhai.

He is a true Panḍit, a religious scholar,
who instructs his own mind.

He searches for the Lord's Name within his own soul.

(SGGS pg. 274)

Panḍit means a scholar. Panḍit was a degree given for education in those days. This was the reason why Sikhs were also addressed as Panḍits after receiving this degree of education e.g. Panḍit Kartār Singh Dākhā, Panḍit Tārā Singh Narottam etc.

This way, a Sikh becomes a Panḍit after receiving the education of truth or Gurmat. Also, Gurū is the Pādhā, teacher or an instructor :

**Dhannu dhannu gurū
guru satiguru pādhā**

jini hari upadesu de kīe siāṇe.

Hail, hail, to the Gurū, the Gurū, the True Gurū,
the Divine Teacher who has made me
wise through the Lord's Teachings.

(SGGS pg. 168)

Gurū is the Pādhā or the teacher and one who contemplates upon
the Gurū, understands the Bāṇī, is a Paṇḍit.

So, the decision has to be sought from the Gurū as to when
should the marriage take place and when there should be the union
of soul and Lord. Gurū gives a wonderful decision that is not
affected by any movement of star or time whatsoever. Which is the
appropriate time for the Union ?

Sā velā kahu kauṇu hai

jitu prabha kau pāi.

Tell me, what is that time,
when I shall find God ?

(SGGS pg.709)

The answer is :

So mūrātu bhalā sanjogu hai

jitu milai gusāi.

Blessed and auspicious is that moment, and that destiny,
when I shall find the Lord of the Universe.

(SGGS pg. 709)

The moment of union is the most auspicious time and the moment
of separation, whether it may be any good or propitious moment
according to the Paṇḍit, it is of no use. The union makes the time
auspicious. That's why there is no need of the so-called Paṇḍit, no
fear of any star etc. and neither to ask someone before beginning :
task.

Guṇī giānī bahi matā pakāiā

phere tatu divāi.

The virtuous and wise men sit down and
decide to perform the marriage immediately.

(SGGS pg. 773)

But today, different things are seen at many places. On one hand, they are performing Ardās and on the other hand, they are indulged in these talks of stars etc. This is our tragedy. When this wavering and dithering enter our Sikh families, it seems as if we are making a mockery of the Gurū.

Similarly, Jai-mālā or exchanging of garlands is also one form of marriage in itself. This was a ritual in earlier times. If we perform Jai-mālā, a night before the marriage, it is to be understood that marriage has been held according to that particular belief. Then there remains no use of going to the Gurū Sahib for Anand Kāraj, the next morning. This is like making a mockery of Gurū Sāhib. When the marriage has been held by performing the Jai-mālā, why we have to perform the Anand Kāraj in the presence of the Gurū ?

There is a message, a blessing lying in every thought of Gurū Sāhib and one should not let that blessing go wasted. Over here, an example has to be taken into consideration.

The great scholar, Panḍit Nishchal Singh Jī, once said that a poet went into a garden and saw a black bee (Bhanvrā) approaching every flower, feeling its fragrance and establishing closeness with them. But she never went near the yellow flowers of Champā. The poet waited till the evening, but the bee didn't go near those flowers. The poet then addressed the flowers and asked, O' Champā ! Do you have some vice in you; you also possess three virtues like other flowers - form, colour and smell, but why this bee never came near you ?

Champā tujh mahi tīn guṇ

rūp rang ar bās.
 Vo avguṇ tujh mahi kaun hai
 jo bhavar nā baiṭhe pās.
 O' Champā, you have three qualities -
 beauty, colour and fragrance.
 What is the vice in you that
 the black bee does not sit on you !

The reply was, O' man ! You cannot understand it. Actually the black bee wants to come near me, but I do not let her come near me.

Mītā mujh mahi tīn guṇ
 rūp rang ar bās.
 Par ṭhaur ṭhaur ke mīt ko
 kāhe biṭhau pās.

O' friend, I have three qualities -
 beauty, colour and fragrance.

But how can one let someone sit near
 who wanders from one place to another.

One who wanders flower to flower, I don't allow such bee to come near me.

Similarly, one who sometimes worships graveyards, goes to Brāhmiṇ for the sake of stars and good omens, performs Jai-mālā before the Anand Kāraj; Gurū Sāhib says what blessings can be bestowed upon such a person who wanders at so many places.

A Gurū's Sikh should perform only Anand Kāraj by sitting in the presence of Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib. A Sikh should not put a question mark on the great blessing of the Gurū in the form of Anand Kāraj, by performing Jai-mālā or any such ritual.

Sikh is a worshipper of only the Akāl Purakh, One Lord. So

he has to contemplate before performing Ardās in the court of One Almighty. Has he been to any such place for any type of assistance or to any Pandit to save him from the effects of the ill-stars ? And still performing the Ardās in the form of Shabad :

**Bhai bhanjana miharvāna
dāsa kī rākhiai.**

The Lord is the Merciful Destroyer of fear;
He preserves and protects His slaves.

Have faith in One Almighty, have conviction in One only. Through this Shabad of Ardās, Gurū wants to generate the great power of faith and confidence in us. He wants that this prayer becomes our faith, our belief, our assurance.

**Nānaka hari guṇa gāi
alakhū prabhū lākhiai.**

O' Nānak, sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord,
and see the Unseen Lord God.

Gurū Sāhib says, O' Lord ! With your blessings, the Alakh, Imperceptible can be known. If we start the task with the Ardās performed before You, the removal of obstacles or hindrances in the worldly life is such a small thing. That's why I perform the Ardās before You.

A Sikh should have such faith in this Ardās or prayer and this prayer becomes his power and protection.



Grasped the hem of Your robe



Saloka mahalā 5.

Usatati nindā Nānaka jī
mai habha vañāi chhoṛiā habhu kijhu tiāgi.
Habhe sāka kūrāve ḍiṭhe
tau palai taiḍai lāgi.

I have totally discarded praise and slander, O' Nānak;
I have forsaken and abandoned everything.
I have seen that all relationships are false,
and so I have grasped hold
of the hem of Your robe, Lord.
(SGGS pg. 963)



Grasped the hem of Your robe

**Habhe sāka kūrāve dīthe
tau palai taiḍai lāgī.**

I have seen that all relationships are false,
and so I have grasped hold of
the hem of Your robe, Lord.

In this phrase, Gurū Sāhib has used the word ‘tau’ (so) as the connector between the two states - one of realization that all relationships in this world are false and thus grasping the hem of the robe of the Lord. The realization that all relationships are false is the most difficult and all the thought process is based upon it.

The ambit of worldly relations is not restricted to kith and kin or fellow human beings but also envelopes fancy to material things. These materialistic things also create a relationship.

Now here the subject is union of soul and the Supreme Being. It is a matter of making this life successful. That’s why we pray to Lord for the blessings so as to erase this line of superstitions and delusions laid in-between and the purpose of our life may be found.

Jivanu tau ganiai hari pekhā.

A person is judged to be alive,

only if he sees the Lord.

(SGGS pg. 1221)

Otherwise this life is incomplete. Further, in this life comes the union of two things - body and soul. The metaphor of husband-wife has been used for describing this union as well as the relation of Supreme Being and the soul, in Gurū Granth Sāhib. It has been done so because the relationship between husband and wife fills the void where the life is incomplete.

Also, anything coming in between the two, makes them incomplete - whether it is the wealth, beauty, youthfulness or any other relative or friend. This is same in the case of a being and the Lord where anything in-between drifts them apart and makes the soul incomplete. The purpose of human birth is to make this life complete.

Dhana kahai tū vasu mai nāle.

Pria sukhavāsī bāla gupāle.

Tujhai binā hau kita hī na lekhai

vachanu dehi chhoḍī na jāsā he.

The body-bride says, "Please live with me,

O my beloved, peaceful, young lord.

Without you, I am of no account.

Please give me your word,

that you will not leave me".

(SGGS pg. 1073)

Without the union with the Supreme Being, soul is of no use.

Jicharu vasiā kantu ghari

jīu jīu sabhi kahāti.

Jā uṭhī chalasī kantarā

tā koi na puchhai terī bāta.

As long as the soul-husband dwells in the body-house,

everyone greets you with respect.
But when the soul-husband arises and departs,
then no one cares for you at all.

(SGGS pg. 50)

All the relatives are due to Him. Without Him, all the remaining relations are false. If He is not near, no one acknowledges. Then with whom to form a relation ? To explain this, Gurū Sahib has created two characters in the Bāṇī - Kuchajī (Ungraceful) and Suchajī (Graceful).

What is the stage of a Kuchajī ?

Suinā rūpā rangulā

motī te māṇiku jiu.

Se vasatū sahī dītīā

mai tinh siu lāiā chitu jiu.

Gold, silver, pearls and rubies are pleasing.

My Husband Lord has blessed me with these things,
and I have focused my thoughts on them.

(SGGS pg. 762)

All these materialistic things are His blessings but due to "Loving the gifts and forgetting the Giver" we have linked ourselves with the objects only.

Mandara miṭī sandaṛe

pathara kīte rāsi jiu.

Hau enī ṭolī bhuliasa

kanta na baiṭhī pāsi jiu.

Palaces of brick and mud are built
and decorated with stones;

I have been fooled by these decorations,
and I do not sit near my Husband Lord.

(SGGS pg. 762)

Forgetting the pleasure we were to obtain from the union of the Husband Lord, we have linked ourselves with these worldly objects. These instances can be observed in our daily lives also.

The wives creating troubles in their houses due to materialistic things, social circle etc., are engulfed in the aspirations of these petty things; instead of the pleasure to be obtained from the union with the husbands. They are constantly wishing for good clothes, ornaments etc. and remain engrossed in aspirations for materialistic things only.

Gurū has said this in context of spiritual love also. Gurū Sāhib states :

Jiha prasādi griha saṅgi sukha basanā.

Āṭha pahara simarahu tisu rasanā.

By His Grace, you abide with your family in peace;
keep His remembrance upon your tongue,
twenty-four hours a day.

(SGGS pg. 269)

In reality, exactly opposite is happening and we don't remember the Beneficial Lord. On the contrary, Suchajī thinks the other way. She says :

Jā tū tā mai sabhu ko

tū sāhiba merī rāsi jīu.

When I have You, then I have everything.

O my Lord and Master, You are my wealth and capital.

(SGGS pg. 762)

O' my Lord ! If you are near me, I have everything. You are my real wealth, my real pleasure.

Now the same rule applies to the marriage, which we have to make 'Anand Kāraj'.

**Rāja na bhāga na hukama na sādana
kichhu kichhu na chāhī.**

Imperial power, fortunes,
royal command and mansions -
I have no desire for these.

(SGGS pg. 406)

All these are not desired and instead :

**Rūkho bhojanu bhūmi saina
sakhī pria saṅgi sukhi bihāta.**

Even with only dry crusts of bread,
and a hard floor on which to sleep,
my life passes in peace and
pleasure with my Beloved, O' sisters.

(SGGS pg. 1306)

There may be simple food to eat, hard floor to sleep on, but union with the husband should be there. The two beings should have love for each other, though they may not have materialistic things in the house. If such is the case, the house becomes full of pleasures.

When Satgurū states about adorning this life :

Satiguru sikha kā halatu palatu savārai.

The True Gurū arranges this world
and the next for His Sikh.

(SGGS pg. 286)

It means Sikh should have materialistic things and pleasures, he should live a good worldly life but also be firm in his beliefs. If these two things enter the Sikh way of life, only then there is a union of soul and the Supreme Being.

Same is the story of the union of body and soul. As soon as the soul departs from the body, body has no value:

Una kai saṅgi tū karatī kela.

Una kai saṅgi hama tuma saṅgi mela.

With that, you are engaged in playful sport;
with that, I am joined to you.

(SGGS pg. 390)

The day He departs from within us, nobody will acknowledge us or
give us recognition :

Unh kai saṅgi tū griha mahi māhari.

Unh kai saṅgi tū hoī hai jāhari.

With that, you are the woman of the house;
with that, you are respected.

One is considered intelligent till there is a relation with Him.

Unh kai saṅgi tū rakhī papoli.

Osu binā tū chhuṭakī roli.

With that, you are caressed;
without it, you are reduced to dust.

One is treated with care till then and afterwards no one pays any
heed.

Unh kai saṅgi terā mānu mahatu.

Unh kai saṅgi tuma sāku jagatu.

Unh kai saṅgi teri sabha bidhi thāṭi.

Osu binā tū hoī hai māṭi.

With that, you have honor and respect;
with that, you have relatives in the world.

With that, you are adorned in every way;
without it, you are reduced to dust.

One has respect because of the soul residing within and all the
relations are also till that time.

Pleasure and happiness take birth from the Union of soul

and the Supreme Being. Similarly, all the materials and pompousness takes birth from the union of body and soul. All the happiness ensues and the life becomes complete. This is the union that should be there within husband and wife, no one should come between them; otherwise all these materials and relations turn out to be false.

Mitra piārā Nānaka jī mai chhaḍi gavāiā

rangi kasumbhe bhulī.

Tau sajanā kī mai kīma na paudī

hau tudhu binu aḍhu na lahaḍī.

I abandoned and lost my Beloved Friend,
O' Nānak; I was fooled by the transitory color
of the safflower, which fades away.

I did not know Your value, O my Friend;
without You, I am not worth even half a shell.

(SGGS pg. 963)

Initially, one is not aware of its value. But after the separation, one has the feeling of sorrow and then its value is known. Till then, a long period of time has passed away.

Khakhariā suhāviā lagariā aka kanṭhi.

Biraha vichhorā dhanī siu

Nānaka sahasai ganṭhi.

The fruit of the swallow-wort plant looks beautiful,
attached to the branch of the tree;
but when it is separated from the stem of its Master,
O' Nānak, it breaks apart into thousands of fragments.

(SGGS pg. 319)

One has the illusion of mangoes on seeing the fruits hanging on the branches of a wild tree. These wild trees are mostly found in the desert regions and in the summer season, these fruits fall from the trees. Falling on the ground, they tear apart and small cotton-

wool type particles emerge out of them. These particles are so light-weight that they move here and there with the stroke of wind; and become like destitute, shelter-less.

Bāṇī wants to make us understand beforehand. Bāṇī beautifully describes the state of those who have been left out or abandoned :

**Nānaka gurū na chetani
mani āpaṇai sucheta.
Chhuṭe tila būāra jiu
suṇe andari kheta.**

O' Nānak, those who do not think of the Gurū,
and who think of themselves as clever,
shall be left abandoned in the field,
like the scattered sesame.

(SGGS pg. 463)

Similarly, there is a big difference in widow and abandoned or divorcee. Widow is the one whose husband has expired. And soul never becomes widow as in the union of soul and Supreme Being, the husband Lord never dies. But alas ! It can become abandoned. That's why, in the union of soul and the Supreme Being, the soul should very well know that it would never become a widow as Lord never dies, He is Indestructible. But if the soul forgets her husband Lord, no one would ever have any sympathy for her. And she would be like :

**Jiu chhuṭari ghari ghari phirai
duhachāraṇi badanāu.**

They wander around from door to door,
like a woman forsaken,
with a bad character and a bad reputation.

(SGGS pg. 645)

This is the Bānī's verdict; these wordings have been used by Gurū Sāhib. The one who leaves the living husband and wanders at other doorsteps is called vicious, disgraced, abandoned. Similarly, those who have made many gods at different places, instead of One Lord, what would they be called ? Their state is also the same as that of abandoned ones.

So, such time should never come in life that soul and Lord separates from each other. Similarly, no other object, material or relation should come within the lives of husband and wife that would create a rift in them. Nothing should come between the two.

One who leaves the house of the living present husband, breaks the mutual relation and goes to live on her own, people call her abandoned and this would be the biggest grouse. People will not say that this is her own house, instead say that she is now sitting at her parent's house. This is the big difference that has to be visualized.

The union of the two beings is possible when some things from the parent's house are deserted and some from the in-law's house are adopted. This becomes the source of the two beings thinking alive.

**Sāhuaraṛī vathu sabhu kichhu sājhi
pevakaṛai ghana vakhe.**

Āpi kuchajī dosu na deū jānā nāhī rakhe.

She herself is ill-mannered;

how can she blame anyone else?

She does not know how to take care of these things.

(SGGS pg. 1171)

From here, Kuchajī is born. She has linked herself with the things of the parent's house due to her ego, saying them to be her own. But when relation has to be formed with the Lord's house, this feeling of

'I, am' has to be discarded. Similarly, when one enters the in-law's house in this world, the feeling of 'I, am' has to be dispensed with. All the conflicts in the house start from this feeling of 'I, am'. This conflict of 'I, am' does not let the two unite. Gurū Sāhib has given the example of the Eternal Home in the Bāṇī.

In this world, one carries along this feeling of 'I, am' to the in-law's house also, in innocence. The same way when a person goes to Gurdwārā, there also he says that this is our Maryādā, our way of worship, this is our Ardās and also to this extent that this is our Gurdwārā. This feeling of 'I, am, our' has entered the house of Lord too.

But we should very well know that in the in-law's house, Lord's house or Eternal Home, everything is common and has to be shared. He created air and did not inscribe upon it that only Hindū or Sikh could breathe in this air and not the Muslims. He created water, fire and earth but has not reserved it for any special category or class. Today, all these conflicts and troubles among different countries are only due to the feeling of 'I, am'.

While clinging to the materialistic world, the soul forgets the Lord and its union comes to an end. Similarly, clasping to the materials and comforts of the house, the wife drifts away from the husband and the pleasure of a home comes to an end. But if there is a mutual understanding between the two, no one can cause any harm to them :

Sasu virāiṇi Nānaka jīu
sasurā vādī jēṭho pau pau lūhai.

Habhe bhasu puṇede vatanu
jā mai sajanu tūhai.

My mother-in-law is my enemy,
O' Nānak; my father-in-law is argumentative

and my brother-in-law burns me at every step.

They can all just play in the dust,
when You are my Friend, O Lord.

(SGGS pg. 963)

Now, this thing does not relate to the union of the soul and the Lord as God has no parents. Here, mother-in-law becomes the enemy, father-in-law argues day and night; and brother-in-law also cause hurdles at every step. But what one has to do with any of these? If my relation with You is strong, I am in union with You, no one can cause me any harm; instead all will have respect for me. That's why, I should consider You as source of my life :

**Je tū vatahi aṅgane
habha dharati suhāvī hoi.
Hikasu kantai bāharī maiḍī
vāta na puchhai koi.**

If You come into my courtyard,
all the earth becomes beautiful.

Other than the One Lord, my Husband,
no one else cares for me.

(SGGS pg. 1095)

The day I understood this thing, I decided :

**Usatati nindā Nānaka jī mai habha vañāī
chhoṛiā habhu kijhu tiāgī.
Habhe sāka kūrāve ḍiṭhe
tau palai taiḍai lāgī.**

I have totally discarded praise and slander, O' Nānak;
I have forsaken and abandoned everything.
I have seen that all relationships are false,
and so I have grasped hold of
the hem of Your robe, Lord.

Nothing can come in between two of us; You and I should become one. Then I would receive all the pleasures of this world. If my relationship with You ceases, no one in the family will respect me and my own materials also cannot give me any pleasure.

So, here Gurū Sāhib explains the method with which one can be united. Because Union is life and separation is death. The five elements created by God unite together to form a life and when these five elements break away, we call it death :

Pavanai mahi pavanu samāiā.

Jotī mahi jotī rali jāiā.

The wind merges into the wind.

The light blends into the light.

(SGGS pg. 885)

If a Sikh learns the way of union from the Gurū and takes His guidance at every turn of life, the life of a Sikh becomes long-lasting and he or she would enjoy the life to its fullest.



The First Lär



Hari pahilaṛī lāva paraviraṭī karama
 dṛiṛāiā bali rāma jiu.
 Bāṇī brahamā vedu dharama dṛiṛahu
 pāpa tajiāi bali rāma jiu.
 Dharamu dṛiṛahu hari nāmu dhiāvahu
 simriti nāmu dṛiṛāiā.
 Satiguru guru pūrā ārādhahu
 sabhi kilavikha pāpā gavāiā.
 Sahaja anandu hoā vaḍabhāgi
 mani hari hari mīṭhā lāiā.
 Janu kahai Nānaku lāva pahili
 ārambhu kāju rachāiā. 1.

In the first round of the marriage ceremony,
 the Lord sets out His Instructions for
 performing the daily duties of married life.
 Instead of the hymns of the Vedas to Brahmā,
 embrace the righteous conduct of Dharma,
 and renounce sinful actions.

Meditate on the Lord's Name;
 embrace and enshrine the contemplative
 remembrance of the Nām.

Worship and adore the Gurū, the Perfect True Gurū,
 and all your sins shall be dispelled.

By great good fortune, celestial bliss is attained,
 and the Lord, Har, Har, seems sweet to the mind.

Servant Nānak proclaims that, in this,
 the first round of the marriage ceremony,
 the marriage ceremony has begun.

(SGGS pg. 773)



The First Lāv

The real form of Anand Kāraj starts from here. The fourth Gurū, Gurū Rām Dās Ji has composed four stanzas of this Shabad in Sūhī Rāg, to define the four stages of the journey of human life; as it is easy to make the journey in stages.

By making a halt, receiving information about the next stage, refreshing before starting for next phase of the journey and again halting in the next stage to ponder as to how was the previous journey. Also, making queries about the onward journey and starting it with the explained method plan - such are the four stages of life. It is like a person starts for some journey and halts on the way to refresh and enquire about the next phase of his journey. But on this way of life, conscience or state of life also changes. The state of a person moves under the guidance of the Gurū.

What are these four Lāvās or Parikarmās or circumambulations ? According to the 'Sikh Rehat Maryādā', there are four circumambulations. These are believed to be the four stages of life and Gurū Sāhib has called the fourth state to be the state of Param Pad or Ultimate Destination. Also, it has been explained here that the state of tranquility or equipoise is the attainment of this destination. That's why Gurū Sāhib has blessed us with this concept

of four Lāvās.

According to the Hindū ideology, there are seven circumambulations and they cannot make six or eight of it, their marriage ceremony is completed with seven rounds taken around the fire. In contrast to this, according to the Gurmat way of life, Sikh takes four circumambulations. These cannot be increased or decreased, this concept of four parikarmās has been blessed upon the Sikh by Gurū Sāhib in accordance with the four stages of life. So, this affair has no resemblance with the rituals of the Hindū religion.

What is the concept of this Lāvā or circumambulation ? Keeping Gurū Sāhib in the middle and taking the circumambulations around it signifies that, ‘O my Satgurū ! Your ideology, Your guidance, Your verdicts are the focus of my life. You are the focus of my life’s journey and my destination. That’s why the steps put forward by me in all my journey of life will be around You.’ This is the significance of these four Lāvās.

A question may arise that why we do the circumambulations from our left side and why Gurū Sāhib is always placed on our right side during all the four circumambulations ? It is because right hand is believed to be a sign of respect and considered to be powerful. Also, we always make to sit our elders on our right. This is a symbol of respect. Circumambulation is the symbol that Will of Gurū is the focus of our life and it would adorn our both the worlds - physical as well as spiritual. That’s why we move our steps around the Gurū only.

Many a times there is a difference of opinion that the bride and bridegroom should listen to the Pāth of Bāṇī of Lāvā while sitting or standing ? I personally think that we should act according to the Sikh Rehat Maryādā. If we have any objections to the decisions taken by the scholars and intellectuals of those times, they

can be rectified after consultation in a Panthak way. But, at present, it is written in the Sikh Rehat Maryādā that ‘the boy and girl, after every circumambulation, should bow before Gurū Granth Sāhib in genuflexion, lowering their forehead to touch the ground and then stand up to listen to the recitation of the next stanza’. As one has to listen to the next Order for the journey of life, one has to remain alert and attentive. Yes, if at any time bride or bridegroom has any type of physical disability, there should be no apprehension about listening to the Order or Hukam while sitting also.

**Hari pahilārī lāva paraviratī karama dīṛāī
bali rāma jiu.**

In the first round of the marriage ceremony,
the Lord sets out His Instructions for
performing the daily duties of married life.

This is the first stanza of the shabad i.e. the first stage. From here, the journey for the union with Lord is to be started, so that a relation is formed and soul becomes one with Him. That's why we pray to the Gurū for guidance. Gurū Sāhib tells us firmly in this first Lāv that nothing is achieved in this world without performing any deed. Action is the focus of life. Man attains or becomes something due to his own deeds. This is called the action field (karam dhartī).

Also, God has not made birth and death independent. Man is not free to choose his place and country of birth according to his preference. That's why it has been said in the Bāṇī :

Jammanu maraṇā hukam hai...
Birth and death are subject to the
Command of the Lord's Will;

(SGGS pg. 472)

On the contrary, the deeds or actions or duties of man are independent in nature and birth does not cause any effect upon it. It

can happen such that :

**Nīcha jāti hari japatiā
utama padavī pāi.**

When someone of low social class chants the Lord's Name,
he obtains the state of highest dignity.

(SGGS pg. 733)

All the transformations in man's life occur due to his own deeds. After taking birth, he can proceed to become a great saint or a dacoit, according to his deeds. It is due to the deeds that the soul becomes Suhāgan (fortunate) or Duhāgan (unfortunate). Also, the deeds or actions are such a tool, which helps the man to be near or away from God.

**Karamī āpo āpaṇī
ke neṛe ke dūri.**

According to their own actions, some are drawn closer,
and some are driven farther away.

(SGGS pg. 8)

Whatever man wants to become, whatever he wants to attain, he has to perform the toil of deeds for that. Without the deeds, neither materials will be obtained nor the Lord. For both the purposes, deeds are to be performed.

Here, a question arises regarding the first Lāv. Gurū Sāhib wants to start the first Lāv with the deeds for the mundane affairs, so that something is done for the journey. Now the question is that what deeds are to be performed and what not ? Because deeds can be misdeeds or evil ones also. So, the soul has to link its deeds with the religion and perform righteous actions. But the righteousness has to be determined by the Gurū.

What is the relationship between deeds and religion ? The purpose of religion or faith is to provide right direction to the deeds

performed. Misguided actions are called vices and those guided in right direction are called righteous actions.

We call a mason to construct a wall of the house. He brings along with him two things - a cord and a plumb-bob. Before starting laying the bricks, he ties the cord. The cord is tied so that the bricks are not placed in an irregular manner, instead they are placed in a uniform pattern. He place the bricks in line with the cord and if some brick falls out of the line, he knocks it back to place it in symmetry. After placing some bricks, he uses the plumb-bob to see that the wall is coming up straight. If the bricks are not placed in a proper manner, the beauty of the wall does not remain and it can collapse. After completion of the job, mason takes back his cord and plumb-bob. He makes several houses with the same two tools, but after completion of every job, the attribute of plumb and bob - to give a proper direction or pattern, remains there only. The cord and plumb-bob leave their virtues in every brick of the constructed wall and if it were not such, all the cement, sand and bricks would have gone waste.

Same is the relationship between deeds and religion. Sṛī Gurū Granth Sāhib is such a Divine mason that gives a uniform pattern and direction; and organizes our bricks of action with the cord and plumb-bob of faith. Every action of life is like a brick. Every step in the journey of life is a brick and every brick has to be placed in the faith of the rules of cord and plumb-bob. Then the brick will become purposeful.

The need is to identify the rule of cord and plumb-bob of the mason. Gurū Sāhib provides guidance for every action of our life. He advises the ears, eyes, feet, tongue to what to do and what not to ? Those who do not receive the guidance of Gurū, they do not know how to talk, walk, eat or dress up.

The need of this guidance is in the spiritual world as well as the materialistic world. The girl who does not know how to speak with elders and treat the elders in the family, signifies that she has actions but no direction. She has the bricks but devoid of cord and plumb-bob. If these bricks are left on its own, no house can be made. That's why the need is to just link one mason equipped with cord and plumb-bob with it. Similarly in the spiritual world, those who have the bricks or actions, but not the cord and plumb-bob of Gurmat :

**Jatī sadāvahi jugati na jaṇahi
chhaḍi bahahi ghara bāru.**

They call themselves celibate, and abandon their homes,
but they do not know the true way of life.

(SGGS pg. 469)

Such countless people are performing religious deeds but devoid of the method. One does not have to stop performing deeds or shy away from the actions, but need is to attach the power of intense effort with it. And to be firm in every action, there is a need of taking guidance from the Gurū.

The first step of the journey of life starts from the deeds for the worldly affairs. One has to come in this world and has to perform some mundane affairs. These worldly affairs do not mean only job, business or some profession but :

**Mana mahi chitavau chitavanī
udamu karau uṭhi nīta.
Hari kīratana kā āharo
dehu Nānaka ke mīta.**

Within my mind, I think thoughts of
always rising early, and making the effort.

O' Lord, my Friend, please bless Nānak with
the habit of singing the Kīrtan of the Lord's Praises.

(SGGS pg. 519)

This also falls in the category of mundane affairs. This deed is such that faith has been fused with it. Gurū Sāhib has stated this to make one walk in the first stage of life. But now the question is that from where should one determine the faith or belief ?

Countless people in the world want to become religious and majority of them are wandering on the doorsteps of various impersonators. Many people in this world try to live a spiritual life but are not successful. This is because they don't know where to find the religion or faith ? One cannot attain faith by lighting lamps under the trees, tying strings to the Pīpal (fig) tree or pressing the legs of the palanquin. If one wants to organize his or her deeds to be righteous or become religious in a true manner, there is only one way for it.

**Bāṇī brahamā vedu dharama dṛīrahu
pāpa tajāiā bali rāma jiū.**

Instead of the hymns of the Vedas to Brahmā,
embrace the righteous conduct of Dharma,
and renounce sinful actions.

Although some may have the Vedās of Brahmā, but for us Bāṇī is the Brahma Veda. We have to ask about the Dharma or righteous actions from the Bāṇī. All our sins will automatically vanish as soon as we learn Dharma from the Bāṇī and start applying it in our actions.

What are these sins and virtues ? While sending the body-soul, God gave two oxen also :

Pāpa punnu dui baila bisāhe

pavanu pūjī paragāsio.

With both sin and virtue,
the ox of the body is purchased;
the air of the breath is
the capital which has appeared.

(SGGS pg. 333)

Two oxen of sins and virtues and the treasure of breaths were given so that the cart can be kept moving. Some people in this world attached the ox of sin and some attached the ox of virtues with it and kept the cart of life moving. But some people were such that they attached both the oxen of sins and virtues with it. Although they recite the Bāṇī in the early morning but speak falsehood the whole day. They attached both the bullocks in their life and drove along with whom they wanted to. They earn their wealth by deceiving others, by wrong methods; but on the other hand, they keep the series of Akhand Pāṭhs rolling in their names. But Bābā Kabīr Jī has stated beautifully in the very last line of this Shabad :

Kahata Kabīra sunahu re santahu

aba aisi bani āi.

Ghāṭī chaḍhata baila iku thākā

chalo goni chhiṭakāi.

Says Kabīr, listen, O' Saints :

This is the state of affairs now !

Going uphill, the ox has grown weary;
throwing off his load, he continues on his journey.

(SGGS pg. 333)

When one has to make a turn, one ox insists that he would not go to this side. The ox of sin does not go into the valley of virtues. That's why, the need is to identify the sins and the virtues.

This recognition of sin and virtue is possible from Gurmat

only. That's why Bāṇī is the Brahma Veda for us. By taking guidance from the Bāṇī, sins will vanish from the actions of life and deeds will become righteous.

**Dharamu drīṛahu hari nāmu dhiāvahu
simriti nāmu drīṛāiā.**

Meditate on the Lord's Name;
embrace and enshrine the contemplative
remembrance of the Nām.

Bāṇī has brought two things together - embrace righteous actions and remember Lord's Name. To embrace righteous actions means to make the deeds virtuous. The task of religion is to take the deeds into the state of knowledge or Giān.

Dharama khaṇḍa kā cho dharamu.

Giāna khaṇḍa kā ākhahu karamu.

This is righteous living in the realm of Dharma.
And now we speak of the realm of spiritual wisdom.

(SGGS pg. 7)

Here, actions are to be performed under the fold of Dharma or faith. Gurū attaches faith with the actions and every action of the being - speaking, walking, sleeping, everything is in the Gurū's Will. Whatever a Sikh performs, it becomes his faith or religion. His deeds become his religion and the sins vanish from within. When the faith blessed by the Gurū attaches with the actions, they become pious and when one meditates :

Saraba dharama mahi sresāṭa dharamu.

Hari ko nāmu japi niramala karamu.

Of all religions, the best religion is to
chant the Name of the Lord
and maintain pure conduct.

(SGGS pg. 266)

Gurū Sāhib states the same thing here in this first Shabad of Lāvā. Gurū Sāhib has brought together the two things - remembrance of God's Name and the deeds performed.

Satiguru guru pūrā ārādhahu

sabhi kilavikha pāpa gavāiā.

Worship and adore the Gurū,

the Perfect True Gurū,

and all your sins shall be dispelled.

Meditate upon the Complete Gurū, make Him reside in your heart. Do not let any step of your life go astray from His way. This is what we call Parikarmā or circumambulation, as all the sins have vanished due to His grace and all the conflicts of inner self have been erased. Whether one is a wayfarer on the spiritual path or a girl or boy in the family life, only his or her life is successful whose all conflicts have been resolved.

Sahaja anandu hoā vaḍabhāgi

mani hari hari mīthā lāiā.

By great good fortune, celestial bliss is attained,

and the Lord, Har, Har, seems sweet to the mind.

Sahaj or equipoise is the first state of bliss or Anand. This is the first stage and is attained with great fortune.

What is the sign of this stage of Sahaj Anand or celestial bliss? The first indication is that the Name of God tastes sweet to the Sikh. When the actions are in accordance with the Gurū's Will, the Name of Lord turns to be sweet.

Janu kahai Nānaku

lāva pahili

ārambhu kāju rachāiā.

Servant Nānak proclaims that, in this,

the first round of the marriage ceremony,
the marriage ceremony has begun.

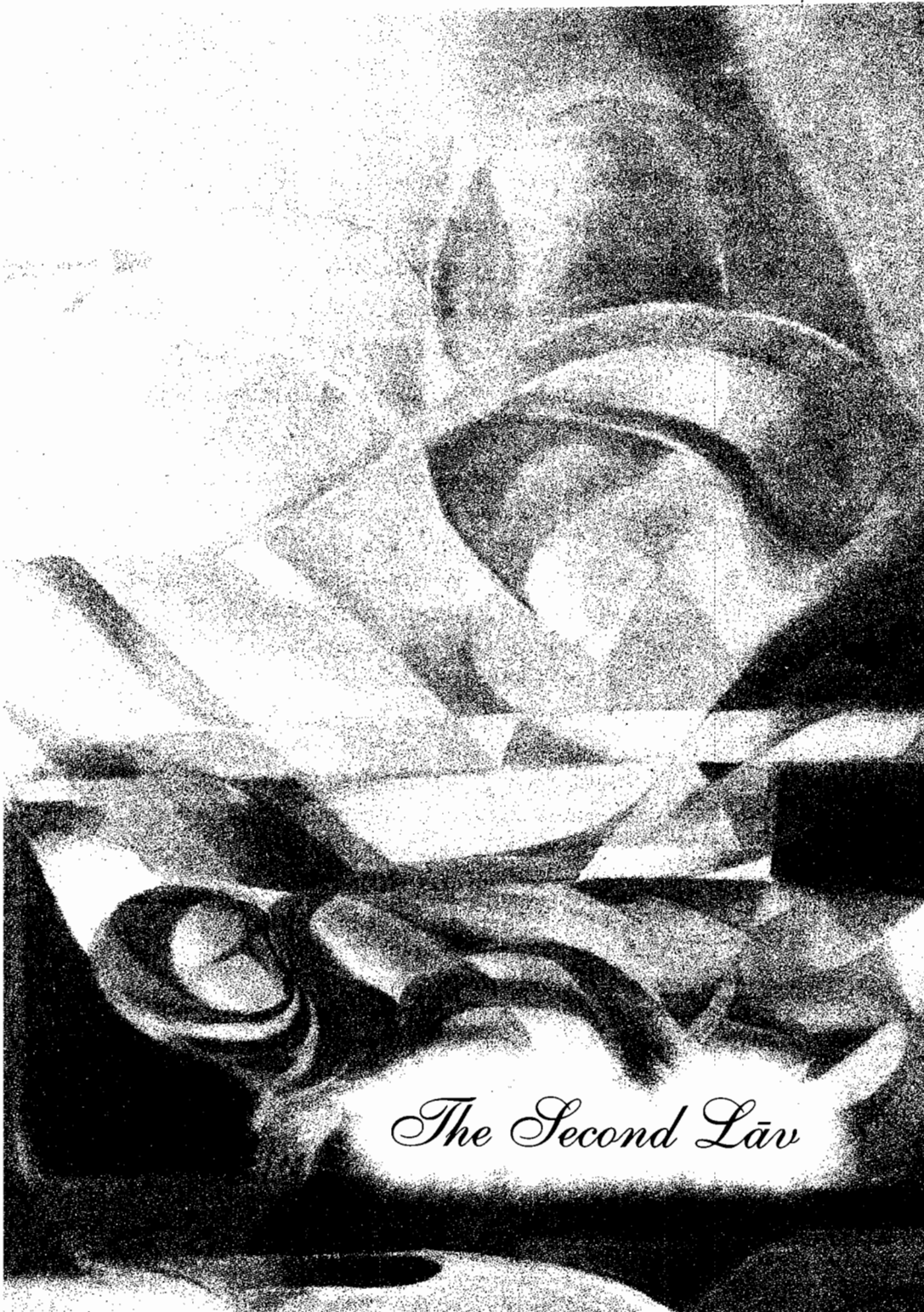
Gurū Sāhib says, This is the first circumambulation or first stage to reach unto the destination of life i.e. equipoise or Param Pad. This is the real start of the journey of this ceremony.

Gurū Sāhib has started this journey from the field of action and has to take it to the state of equipoise. This state of equipoise or Sahaj is the Ultimate Destination. That's why it has been stated in the fourth Lāv :

Hari chautharī lāv
mani sahaju bhaiā
hari pāiā bali rāma jiu.

In the fourth round of the marriage ceremony,
my mind has become peaceful;
I have found the Lord.

The True Gurū will be explaining the complete journey. The knowledge of this journey will tell us the way of reaching the Ultimate Destination in the spiritual world, as well as provide us the pleasurable things for our family life. If we go on to include these virtues in our family life, the families would become Anand Kāraj. Also, if we make this guidance as our basis of life for the spiritual world, it will become the state of Sahaj i.e. the state of Union.



The Second Lär



Hari dūjaṛī lāva satiguru purakhu milāiā bali rāma jiu.
 Nirabhau bhai manu hoi haumai mailu gavāiā bali rāma jiu.
 Niramalu bhau pāiā hari guṇa gāiā hari vehkai rāmu hadūre.
 Hari ātama rāmu pasāriā suāmī saraba rahiā bharapūre.
 Antari bāhari hari prabhu eko mili hari jana mangala gae.
 Jana Nānaka dūjī lāva chalāi anahada sabada vajāe.

In the second round of the marriage ceremony,
 the Lord leads you to meet the True Gurū,
 the Primal Being.
 With the Fear of God, the Fearless Lord in the mind,
 the filth of egotism is eradicated.
 In the Fear of God, the Immaculate Lord,
 sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord,
 and behold the Lord's Presence before you.
 The Lord, the Supreme Soul,
 is the Lord and Master of the Universe;
 He is pervading and permeating everywhere,
 fully filling all spaces.
 Deep within, and outside as well,
 there is only the One Lord God.
 Meeting together, the humble servants of the Lord
 sing the songs of joy.
 Servant Nānak proclaims that, in this,
 the second round of the marriage ceremony,
 the unstruck sound current of the Shabad resounds.

(SGGS pg. 774)



The Second Lāv

In the first lāv, it was stated that the success of life depends upon the action field of the being. One has to perform an action or a deed. But why one is always unsuccessful in his or her action field ? This is because one doesn't know the way or method. Although one may continue performing religious deeds, but due to lack of proper method, one just repents in the end.

Religion is a kind of tool for the deeds. Religion is needed for the deeds to be put in a proper direction. And that religion is determined by Gurū and the Bāṇī. Through this only, religion makes the deeds righteous. Therefore Gurū becomes the anchor of wisdom and takes it to the Ultimate Destination, while keeping the journey of deeds in control.

From here, the second phase of journey starts with the second lāv. Gurū explains here both the things - needs and effects of the next journey.

In our lives too, journey is not yet finished, instead it is ongoing. Today the life is fast due to the increased resources and also, man has expanded its sphere a lot.

When the being was to come from God's place, he prayed, 'O' Lord ! I am going afar from you, if I wish to meet You,

yearning for You arises, how shall I meet You ?' God replied, 'Take this horse of mind with you. Its speed is very fast, it will bring you near me in few moments only.' But he has to see to it that its direction is proper. The mind can take the being near the God within few moments, due to its high speed. Also, if it starts moving in the opposite direction, it takes it away from Him equally fast. That's why one has to control the mind so that its direction remains proper.

**Manu kucharu pīlaku
gurū giānu kundā
jaha khinche taha jāi.**

The mind is the elephant, the Gurū is its driver,
and knowledge is the whip.

Wherever the Gurū drives the mind, it goes.

(SGGS pg. 516)

Keeping it in control, it reaches unto the God and thus the problem of meeting Him is solved. But on the other hand :

**Nānaka hasatī kunde bāharā
phiri phiri ujharī pāi.**

O' Nānak, without the whip,
the elephant wanders into the wilderness,
again and again.

(SGGS pg. 516)

If it is not in one's control, it does not have any abode or place to settle. That's why to keep the mind in control, the knowledge Gurū is needed.

**Hari dūjarī lāva
satiguru purakhu milāiā bali rāma jīu.**

In the second round of the marriage ceremony,

the Lord leads you to meet
the True Gurū, the Primal Being.

Now, the task starts for the Union with God. Where God has to come, He first sends the Gurū over there so that the abode could be made compatible for the Lord to reside in it.

**Hari gurū milāvahu mere piāre
ghari vasai hare.**

Meet with the Lord - Gurū,
O' my dear beloved, and
He will dwell in the home of your self.

(SGGS pg. 451)

Gurū has to come first for the Lord to reside in a particular abode. In the abode where Gurū has never arrived, the Lord will also not come over there because the abode has not been made compatible for the Lord to reside in it. Gurū has to first come to see how much rubbish and filth of sins, ego, jealousy and vices are scattered in it. Gurū has to throw all of these out of it by taking the broom of knowledge in his hand and the abode has to be thoroughly cleaned up. This task of cleaning up the abode is performed by the Bāṇī.

There are plenty of things already residing in the heart and there is no place for God to be seated in it. That's why first of all Bāṇī reaches the heart. The person who does not accept the effect of Bāṇī or Gurū Shabad, he cannot hope for the God to come and reside in him. God may be inside him but it will remain hidden due to accumulation of so much filth inside. At present, ego is residing within and God would not come over there. If the Name of the Lord has to reside over there, the filth in the form of ego has to be eradicated. But the problem is that a person cannot remove this filth with his or her own intellect, as it is a chronic disease. The filth of

sin is being accumulated due to the deeds full of ego performed by a person and as a result, a fear is being produced.

Man is continuously surrounded with this shadow of fear, everywhere there is fear of one thing or the other :

**So dare ji pāpa kamāvadā
dharamī vigasetu.**

The one who commits sins lives in fear,
while the one who lives righteously rejoices.

(SGGS pg. 84)

One who earns his living through evil means, he does not sleep properly in the night and remains awake, as he has a feeling of fear of raid at anytime. But the one who does not indulge in such practices, he does not have any type of fear. Fear arises from the sins. Till there are sins residing within, how can God come to reside over there.

Those who have a desire for meeting Him, those who have put a step forward on the path of righteousness according to the first lāv, initially the Gurū reaches first to help them. Gurū removes the filth of ego from their inner self. As a result, the sins are removed and the person becomes fearless.

**Nirabhau bhai manu hoi
haumai mailu gavāiā bali rāma jiu.**

With the Fear of God,
the Fearless Lord in the mind,
the filth of egotism is eradicated.

Man was happy in his childhood days when he neither had any ego nor any worry at that time. Fear and worry have also erupted within him with the emergence of ego. Gurū Sāhib has beautifully explained in the Bāñī, 'Why I do not fear ? It is because I do not do anything; he only fears who does something. I would fear

if I say I have done this myself.’

**Ḍarīai tā̃ je
kichhu āpa dū kīchai
sabhu karatā āpaṇī kalā vadhāe.**

We should only be afraid,
if we try to do things by ourselves;
the Creator is increasing His Power in every way.

(SGGS pg. 308)

Whatever happens, it is according to His Will. Neither I speak myself nor do I do anything myself.

All this feeling of fear is due to the ego residing within. As this filth of ego is cleansed from inside, all the fears also get eradicated. So the Gurū collects all the filth and rubbish from inside with the broom of knowledge and throws it outside. Now all the filth of ego is removed and there remains no fear inside.

Here a question arises that fear should not be there as it is an omen, a bad thing. Fear is produced due to ego and it is the filth of ego, which is not required. But opposite of this ‘filth’, ‘pure’ is needed. Where there is no filth, we call it pure or pious or ‘Nirmal’ and the person requires this ‘Nirmal Bhau’ or pious fear. The mind was smeared with the filth of ego and when that filth has been eradicated, the mind becomes fearless. But now the person needs the ‘Nirmal Bhau’ or holy fear or fear of God.

While extracting the fear filled with filth of ego from within, Gurū does not leave the space vacant behind. Gurū extracts something from inside and places some other thing in its place :

**Pancha manāe pancha rusāe
pancha vasāe pancha gavāe.**
When the five virtues were reconciled,

and the five passions were estranged,
I enshrined the five within myself,
and cast out the other five.

(SGGS pg. 430)

If five are separated, five are to be united. If five are thrown out of the abode, five have to be placed there instead. Lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride have to be thrown out and in their place truth, contentment, compassion, faith and patience have to be brought in. The fear filled with filth of ego has to be eradicated from within and the Holy Fear or fear of God has to be essentially brought in.

What is this 'Nirmal Bhau' or Holy Fear ? This is the fear, which always remains there that whatever I am doing, someone is watching me. This fear can be found in one's self when one comes to believe that He is always with him.

**Niramalu bhau pāiā
hari guṇa gāiā
hari vehkai rāmu hadūre.**

In the Fear of God, the Immaculate Lord,
sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord,
and behold the Lord's Presence before you.

Man does have fear until he sees Him himself. Man remains a culprit even if he hides his sins from others. He thinks that no one is watching him. All the sins want to be in darkness, they require a cover.

The entire world hates darkness, nothing is possible in sheer darkness and the darkness stops the light of life. Man has assigned the night for sleeping because he does not want to see the darkness. But only a thief is such a person in this world who waits eagerly for

the darkness because night becomes a blanket for his deeds, no one recognizes him in the darkness. That's why all the sins desire for cover of darkness as no one wishes to be recognized.

Sin or wrong deed can be performed easily till someone sees it. For instance, we are driving a car and we see a signboard on the roadside indicating 'Speed limit 60 mph'. But we still keep on driving at a higher speed and suddenly we see a traffic police vehicle standing ahead on the roadside, we immediately raise the foot from the accelerator and it lands on the brake pedal bringing the car to the permissible speed. Although this was indicated by the signboard on the roadside, which had been placed by the same traffic police and it signifies the same rule; but we did not tend to understand at that time. Alas ! This is human character.

Man performs the sin under a cover and he thinks that no one is watching him. This thing is to be understood at the family level also. Many times, man comes late from the night clubs and on returning home, he says that he got late in some official meeting; as no one from the family has seen him in the club. But there should be a spiritual closeness between the two, there should be no width in between. Here the concept of 'One Light two forms' works. The day we stop hiding ourselves in front of each other, our home will become a heaven. The sins will not vanish from the house until our habit of hiding something from one another does not cease.

The filth of sins will be removed when the Holy Fear is instilled inside. The fear will be such that God is near me and He is always watching me; I should not do such a thing, which is unpleasant to the Lord.

A person knows that my God does not approve of alcohol, that's why he does not go in a drunken state to the Gurdwārā. He thinks that Gurū resides over there only, God is near him in the

Gurdwārā only and so he can consume alcohol at his house or in the club. But if this belief arises within him that :

**Hari ātama rāmu pasāriā suāmī
saraba rahiā bharapūre.**

The Lord, the Supreme Soul,
is the Lord and Master of the Universe;
He is pervading and permeating everywhere,
fully filling all spaces.

Then he would not only put this signboard in the Gurdwārā that no one is allowed to enter here in a drunken state, but also on the front door of his house. The moment a Sikh realizes in the evening at the time of opening the bottle of liquor that God is seated next to him and watching him closely, he will not open the bottle again. Also, he will not play any fraud or speak falsehood with anyone in future. All his deeds of sins would be erased when he believes and sees his God to be present everywhere. He would have the firm belief that God is Omnipresent. This fear of God or Holy Fear is living in the presence of His fear.

In this journey of life Gurū has entered within our heart so that the filth of sins can be removed and the abode of life has to be made compatible for the God to reside in it. Then this Holy Fear will reside within and indication of this Holy Fear would be that one would realize God as omnipresent. Due to this, one would not be able to perform any sin and thus, the filth of sins would be washed away.

That's why the biggest attribute of all is to realize God to be near :

**Sagala guṇā guṇa ūtamo
bharatā dūri na pikhu rī.**

Of all virtues, the most sublime virtue is to
see your Husband Lord near at hand.

(SGGS pg. 400)

While Gurbāṇī instructs us that God is always with us, He is with us all the times, He is near us. The Sikh bows before this Bāṇī everyday and calls it the Gurū, but still is engaged in performing various kinds of sins thinking that no one is watching him. The day the fear comes in the mind of the Sikh that he has to live in accordance with the Will of the Gurū, He is always with him, He has made His expanse everywhere, He has created the whole creation and residing within it; he would not hide anything from Him and would realize Him to be everywhere - inside and outside.

Antari bāhari hari prabhu eko

mili hari jana mangala gae.

Jana Nānaka dūji lāva chalāi

anahada sabada vajāe.

Deep within, and outside as well,

there is only the One Lord God.

Meeting together, the humble servants of

the Lord sing the songs of joy.

Servant Nānak proclaims that, in this,

the second round of the marriage ceremony,

the unstruck sound current of the Shabad resounds.

This way the journey of the second circumambulation, the second stage is to be completed, when the Gurū comes within us. We get linked with the Bāṇī, ego vanishes from inside and the Holy Fear comes to reside within. On the basis of this Holy Fear, we come to visualize the creation of One Almighty everywhere and realize that one cannot hide anything from Him at any place.



The Third Lar



Hari tījarī lāva mani chāu bhaiā bairāgīā bali rāma jīu.
 Santa janā hari melu hari pāiā vaḍabhāgīā bali rāma jīu.
 Niramalu hari pāiā hari guṇa gāiā mukhi bolī hari bāṇī.
 Santa janā vaḍabhāgī pāiā hari kathīai akatha kahaṇī.
 Hiradai hari hari hari dhuni upajī
 hari japīai masataki bhāgu jīu.
 Janu Nānaku bolai tījī lāvai hari upajai mani bairāgu jīu.

In the third round of the marriage ceremony,
 the mind is filled with Divine Love.
 Meeting with the humble Saints of the Lord,
 I have found the Lord, by great good fortune.
 I have found the Immaculate Lord,
 and I sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord.
 I speak the Word of the Lord's Bāṇī.
 By great good fortune, I have found the humble Saints,
 and I speak the Unspoken Speech of the Lord.
 The Name of the Lord, Har, Har, Har,
 vibrates and resounds within my heart;
 meditating on the Lord,
 I have realized the destiny inscribed upon my forehead.
 Servant Nānak proclaims that,
 in this, the third round of the marriage ceremony,
 the mind is filled with Divine Love for the Lord.

(SGGS pg. 774)



The Third Lāv

**Hari tijaṛi lāva
mani chāu bhaiā
bairāgīā bali rāma jiu.**

In the third round of the marriage ceremony,
the mind is filled with Divine Love.

Gurū Sāhib has put together these two words - Bairāg i.e. renunciation and Chāu i.e. elation, in this third lāv. Bairāg is the feeling of separation and Chāu is the feeling of meeting someone. The heart which does not harbour the feeling of separation nor union, that heart is hollow and vacuous.

If there were no feeling of separation, this journey would not have started at the first place. These feelings of separation and elation are dependent on one notion. Due to this feeling of separation, soul made an effort for the union and took the guidance from the Gurū. While engaged in the worldly deeds, the soul had a feeling of non-attachment and it reached such a stage that it started seeing the Lord to be everywhere. And the soul-bride had the firm faith that whom she was searching, was with her only. Now the same feeling of separation got transformed into elation.

In our daily lives, if some near one leaves the mortal world,

the remaining family members are bereaved; they are full of grief. Although all the members are not totally affected by the feeling of bereavement or separation, some just pretend to be so and it is a mere formality for them. Only they are actually affected by this pain, those who really experience the feeling of separation. Where there is no feeling, there is no grief. In the physical world, in contrast the grief felt for the separation of some human being does not transform into the feeling of elation. This is a huge difference between the two.

When some relative passes away, one feels the grief or bereavement, but that feeling of separation does not change to rejoicing or elation because one knows that who has separated, will never meet again; no matter how intense the bereavement. One does not hope for the departed one to meet again. That's why the feeling of separation always remains there, it never metamorphoses into elation.

But on the other hand, in the case of separation from the Lord, the soul performs an effort full of elation or pleasure, as there is a hope of meeting Him again. The span of separation could be very long as revealed in Gurbānī :

**Bahuta janama bichhare the mādhai
chu janamu tumhāre lekhe.
Kahi Ravidāsa āsa lagi jivau
chira bhaio darasanu dekhe.**

For so many incarnations,
I have been separated from You, Lord;
I dedicate this life to You.
Says Ravi Dās: placing my hopes in You,
I live; it is so long since I have gazed
upon the Blessed Vision of Your Darshan.

(SGGS pg. 694)

The hope has turned into celebration. Here there is a hope of this transformation but there is no such hope in the worldly relations. That's why the feeling of grief always remains there, but here this feeling of separation turns into delight. However, this transformation is only possible if the soul-bride has the realization of this Union.

Some people never fathom that they are separated from the Lord. They have forgotten the Master. There is a big difference in forgetting and being separated. Man sometimes gets separated due to some unavoidable circumstances, though he may not want to. He has the feeling of such separation and he knows that he cannot forget the one from whom he had been separated.

The soul gets separated from the Lord as :

Pancha dūta mila pirahu vichhoṛī.

Bhrami bhrami rovai hātha pachhoṛī.

The five demons have joined together,
to separate me from my Husband Lord.

Wandering and rambling,

I cry out and wring my hands.

(SGGS pg. 375)

But the soul-bride has the realization of this separation; that's why she cries and is full of grief. If she did not have the realization, she would not be crying ?

However, in life's journey separation is inevitable. For instance, Pākistān came into existence in 1947 and many of our historical Gurdwārās got separated from us. That's why in the Ardās we use the words 'from whom the Panth got separated' and not 'deserted or forgotten'. This separation was due to the unavoidable circumstances, they were neither deserted nor forgotten. Although more than half a century has passed, but still we remember them

daily in our Ardās. The thing that is in the heart cannot be forgotten. The daily remembrance of these historical Gurdwārās reflects the feeling or realization of separation.

The heart in which the feeling of separation and hope for the Union is not there, is definitely empty :

Birahā birahā ākhiai

birahā tū sulatānu.

Faridā jitu tani birahu na ūpajai

so tanu jānu masānu..

Many talk of the pain and suffering of separation;

O pain, you are the ruler of all.

Farid, that body, within which love of the

Lord does not well up

- look upon that body as a cremation ground.

(SGGS pg. 1379)

Consider the body, devoid of feeling or realization, to be a dead one. Even after death, all feelings vanish from within, leaving behind the body.

There is a need to arouse a feeling in the heart, as all the effort arises from the feeling of separation in the heart. But today, the soul is not having the realization of this separation. It has not entered one's mind that till date he or she has not partook Amrit, has forgotten to go to Gurdwārā or do Nitnem in the morning - this realization is on the verge.

Realization is a big force that gives rise to effort. The journey of this Lāv starts from the realization. First, a desire has aroused in the soul-bride that she got separated from the Master Lord, how can one reach unto Him again ? The Shabad we recite for the sake of Union in the beginning :

Jaisā satiguru suṇidā
taiso hī mai dīṭhu.
Vichhūṛia mele prabhū
hari daragaha kā basīṭhu.

As I have heard of the True Gurū,
so I have seen Him.

He re-unites the separated ones with God;
He is the Mediator at the Court of the Lord.

(SGGS pg. 957)

He re-unites the separated ones because separation and union are two sides of the same coin. The one who has never got separated, cannot have the desire for the Union. The one who has never met Him, how could he know the pleasure of the Union. He would never know that this realization has ceased within him.

That's why the realization of these two things should always be there. These things are also included in our daily lives. The wife sends her husband to work in the morning and for the whole day, she has the feeling that he is not present in the house. That's why she stands waiting for him in the doorway in the evening. She waits there as she experienced the feeling of separation the entire day. And the wife who does not wait in the evening for her husband to return, she neither has the feeling of separation nor the Union. The same is the case in terms of the husband who does not think while returning home that someone would be waiting for him. These things are correlated to us in our daily lives. The husband who returns home in a drunken state at night, does not have the feeling and realization that someone is waiting for his return. The children who were waiting to sit in the father's lap, get frightened on seeing him in such a state and avoid him. The wife who has been waiting to share her feelings with him, also remains silent. The husband drinks as he has suffered

some financial loss and he feels miserable, but he does not have the right to shatter the sentiments of his children and wife. That's why there should be no alcohol in the house-holder's place because it eradicates the realization or the feelings.

This is how alcohol creates havoc. It kills the realization and one forgets his duties. One does not forget his worries or tensions after consuming this, instead one forgets the feelings of these worries. The worries and tensions remain as they are, but their feeling or realization is forgotten. Can consuming alcohol make good the loss incurred in business ? - No, the problem is not tackled head on, instead it has been evaded for some period of time. This measure subdues the feelings, the entire treasure of life; as life is the reflection of feelings and realization only.

The realization produces 'Bairag' as there was a feeling of separation. Now there has to be a Union and the feeling of this Union has produced elation within.

**Hari tijaṛi lāva mani chāu bhaiā
bairāgiā balī rāma jiu.**

In the third round of the marriage ceremony,
the mind is filled with Divine Love.

Here, the journey after the 'Bairāg' or non-attachment is through Gurū. There is renunciation or non-attachment, but it is just a tool for making an effort, to produce a consciousness. This renunciation would give rise to an effort that something has to be done for the union of the soul and Master Lord.

In the first lāv, the feeling was aroused and the journey was given a start as something has to be done. Gurū has blessed by saying that only action or deeds should not be there, instead faith or belief should accompany them. This third lāv is such a turn that the

non-attached soul has been blessed with the elation. But how this celebration has to be attained ?

Santa janā hari melu hari pāiā

vaḍabhāgiā bali rāma jiu.

Meeting with the humble Saints of the Lord,
I have found the Lord, by great good fortune.

The beginning of that Union is from realization only.

Niramalu hari pāiā

hari guṇa gāiā

mukhi bolī hari bāṇī.

I have found the Immaculate Lord,
and I sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord.
I speak the Word of the Lord's Bāṇī.

The previous aspects stated in the first and second lāv have been addressed simultaneously by Gurū Sāhib. These four stanzas are part of one Shabad only. How can the fear arising from filth of ego be pure or holy ? The Gurū has removed this fear and blessed the soul with the Holy Fear. And this fear could be of Him who is Himself pure. That's why here 'Hari' or God has been called nirmal or pure. Now the God that has been attained is pure or virtuous. With the support of the pure Bāṇī, the pure Lord has been attained and when this union is visualized in the form of realization, elation or fervor is produced.

In the worldly separation, there is no ecstasy afterwards; there is only grief and sorrow left. But in the spiritual world, when the soul-bride has this realization that she has been separated and has to re-unite, there is no sorrow.

Khojata khojata bhai bairāgani

prabha darasana kau hau phirata tisāi.

Searching and searching,

I have become a renunciate, free of desire.
I wander around, searching for the
Blessed Vision of God's Darshan.

(SGGS pg. 204)

The solution of this separation lies in its realization, that gets aroused in the soul and this separation changes to elation.

Dīna diāla kirapāla prabha Nānaka
sādhasaṅgi meri jalan bujhāi.

God is Compassionate, and Merciful to the meek;
O' Nānak, in the Sādh Saṅgat,
the Company of the Holy,
the fire of desire has been quenched.

(SGGS pg. 204)

The entire initiative was for the Union of the Lord and the Lord is attained through the Sādh-saṅgat, the holy congregation.

The Lord is Inexpressible and he is called so because no one has seen Him from so near. That's why He is Inexpressible as He cannot be expressed. How can the Inexpressible be defined ? If we start describing Him, then how will He remain Inexpressible ? He is Inexpressible for those, who have not had His taste. Those who have tasted Him, they have known Him. This is just like the sweet candy of the mute who tastes it but cannot speak about it. But it does not remain Inexpressible for those :

Santa janā vaḍabhāgī pāiā
hari kathīai akatha kahaṇi.

By great good fortune,
I have found the humble Saints,
and I speak the Unspoken Speech of the Lord.
Those who have not related themselves with the Lord, not

linked themselves with the Gurū; they have not known the nectar of Bāṇī. They have remained just plain listeners and they are not able to understand this Inexpressible tale. But those who have attached themselves with the Lord, linked themselves with the Gurū and got merged in Him, they can understand this Inexpressible tale because they can enjoy the bliss of it themselves.

It might be a different thing that sometimes they themselves are not able to express the Almighty in their words. Gurū Sāhib has also said in the Bāṇī that the Lord does not come within the ambit of worldly recitations and penning. He is beyond it.

Akharī likhaṇu bolāṇa bāṇī.

Akharā siri sanjogu vakhāṇī.

Jini ehi likhe tisu siri nāhi.

From the Word, come the written and
spoken words and hymns.

From the Word, comes destiny,
written on one's forehead.

But the One who wrote these Words of Destiny
- no words are written on His Forehead.

(SGGS pg. 4)

That's why those who get a taste of Him, see Him to be near. Having realized and tasted Him, they are still unable to fully state about the Lord as Lord is boundless and limitless. He just bursts forth in elation and says, O' Lord ! Your attributes are infinite, I cannot state them.

Hamari jīhabā eka prabha

hari ke guṇa agama athāha.

I have only one tongue,
and the Glorious Virtues of the Lord God
are Unapproachable and Unfathomable.

(SGGS pg. 1314)

He feels the Lord's attributes though he is unable to express them. As a result of this realization, he does not have to make any effort within him for singing the praises of Lord; instead a symphony is produced within him, spontaneously.

Hiradai hari hari hari dhuni upajī

hari japīai masataki bhāgu jīu.

The Name of the Lord, Har, Har, Har, vibrates
and resounds within my heart;
meditating on the Lord,
I have realized the destiny
inscribed upon my forehead.

Symphony produced is such that it is unbreakable, it goes on uniformly without any interruption and for which no effort has to be made. However, in this journey one makes effort and practice until :

Giānai kārana karama abhiāsu.

For the sake of spiritual wisdom,
people act and practice rituals.

(SGGS pg. 1167)

To practice means to exercise, to try, to make effort. This trying or making an effort is a symbol of ego in itself. That's why there should be no effort; instead life should become a form of His praises and one should not get entangled in the mire of rituals and formalism. It should be such that the devotion for the Lord becomes as simple and spontaneous as the act of breathing. Breathing is such a vital part of human living and survival, yet it goes on without even one knowing and we never know how many exhalations and inhalations have taken place. No special or conscious effort is made towards this primary and significant aspect of life.

The moment Lord becomes part of our life, grief will vanish,

will ensue elation and we will taste the nectar of the Union. Once this realization comes within us, a melody of singing His praises will be produced in our lives. This melody or symphony will unite us with Him forever and there would be no moment left when we would be separated from Him. Now the Lord will reside in the heart in the form of a melody.

**Janu Nānaku bolai tīji lāvai
hari upajai manī bairāgu jīu.**

Servant Nānak proclaims that, in this,
the third round of the marriage ceremony,
the mind is filled with Divine Love for the Lord.

All this miracle is due to the feeling of separation produced within, whose realization inspired us to arrive at this stage. And this realization has transformed into elation and then the Union.

Until we do not arouse this realization within us that we have got separated from the Lord, we cannot raise our steps for the circumambulation and the circumambulations or journey made under the guidance of the Gurū will change the grief of separation to elation and take us to the Union with the Lord Master. This is the journey of life till the third lāv.



The Fourth Lär



Hari chautharī lāva mani sahaju bhaiā

hari pāiā bali rāma jiu.

Guramukhi miliā subhāi hari mani tani

mīthā lāiā bali rāma jiu.

Hari mīthā lāiā mere prabha bhāiā anadinu hari liva lāi.

Mana chindiā phalu pāiā suāmī hari nāma vajī vādhāi.

Hari prabhi ṭhākuri kāju rachāiā dhana hiradai nāmi vigāsi.

Janu Nānaku bole chauthī lāvai hari pāiā prabhu avināsi.4.2.

In the fourth round of the marriage ceremony,

my mind has become peaceful;

I have found the Lord.

As Gurmukh, I have met Him, with intuitive ease;

the Lord seems so sweet to my mind and body.

The Lord seems so sweet; I am pleasing to my God.

Night and day,

I lovingly focus my consciousness on the Lord.

I have obtained my Lord and Master,

the fruit of my mind's desires.

The Lord's Name resounds and resonates.

The Lord God, my Lord and Master, blends with His bride,

and her heart blossoms forth in the Nām.

Servant Nānak proclaims that, in this,

the fourth round of the marriage ceremony,

we have found the Eternal Lord God.

(SGGS pg. 774)



The Fourth Lāv

The journey begins with the onset of steps. If steps cease, the journey will not be accomplished and the destination will not be attained. But when the destination is attained, sound of the steps stops by itself. Reaching there, the steps come to a halt and if they do not stop, there could be two reasons behind it. First, the destination is incomplete or we fail to recognize the destination. The indication of attainment of destination is that the steps come to a halt and do not move after that. So, the movement of steps means moving towards the destination and stopping of this movement means the attainment of destination. The four stages from first to fourth lāv are indicative of this story.

The first lāv starts with the action or deeds and deed means movement or to put a step forward, like how much action the being has performed in his lifetime. In the first lāv, steps are put forward, the action field starts and the exercise begins. And the Gurū provides direction to those actions. Then from that direction, emerges the feeling of separation, which brings one to the state where the grief of separation turns into elation. This means that the destination has been attained and when the destination is attained, the steps stop automatically. Then the struggle finishes, one does not have to make

an effort and the effort transforms into Sahaj or equipoise.

When one puts some effort for doing something, he is engulfed in some kind of worry, tension or fear; but as that effort comes to an end, the task becomes spontaneous. It is not such that deeds are not being performed, instead they are going on effortlessly. Previously one used to recite the Name of God and now Name is being recited spontaneously. This is the only difference between exercise or practice and equipoise or spontaneity.

**Hari chautharī lāva
mani sahaju bhaiā
hari pāiā bali rāma jiu.**

In the fourth round of the marriage ceremony,
my mind has become peaceful (Sahaj);
I have found the Lord.

Sahaj is a very subtle subject and needs to be contemplated with full consciousness. Gurū Sāhib has stated in the Bānī :

Gura kā sabadu rida antari dhārai.

Pancha janā siu saṅgu nivārai.

Dasa indrī kari rākhai vāsi.

Tā kai ātamai hoi pargāsu.

Those who implant the Word
of the Gurū's Shabad within their hearts
cut their connections with the five passions.
They keep the ten organs under their control;
their souls are enlightened.

(SGGS pg. 236)

When the soul is enlightened, it becomes :

**Jetā sunaṇā tetā nāmu.
Jetā pekhanu tetā dhiānu.**

Whatever they hear is the Nām,
the Name of the Lord.
Whatever they see is meditation.

(SGGS pg. 236)

One does not have to meditate or concentrate, it is inculcated in the conduct. Now when he sees his brother, he sees God in him. Concentration is the realization of the feeling. It is not unusual for someone not to notice a person passing by, because his concentration is somewhere else. Similarly words heard may not be listened to and request for repeat is very common.

When a person enters the state of celestial bliss or equipoise or Nām Sahaj, he would hear only the Nām. Now he would not have to listen anything, he does not have to do something formal or with any effort, he is in equipoise.

All the formalities in the world are indicative of the width or gap in relationships. As proximity arises, formalities start to cease. These formalities come to an end because when being formal, one has to keep in mind as to only that should be done, which is liked by the other side. He has to be asked about his likings or taste. But when one comes to know of Him, these formalities disappear and there comes the equipoise. In this state of calm, the formalities disappear and all the deeds are performed in a spontaneous manner.

This way, when the person is one with God, the state of equipoise is formed and one does not have to listen to the Name of God in a formal manner. While going about in the world, the concentration is linked to Him and one sees Him in all the parts and creation of the world. If one sees God in his or her parents or spouse, one cannot maltreat them or misbehave with them. All the family relations would be cordial if this tenet were to be understood. So, one needs this state of equipoise to form a relationship with God

and also to have peace in the household. If one attains this state of Sahaj or equipoise, all the behaviour would be right and no family would break. Then :

Sahaje jāgaṇa sahaje soi.

Sahaje hotā jāi su hoi.

Sahaje bairāgu sahaje hī hasanā.

Sahaje chūpa sahaje hī japanā.

They awaken in peace and poise;
they sleep in peace and poise.

That which is meant to be, automatically happens.

In peace and poise, they remain detached;
in peace and poise, they laugh.

In peace and poise, they remain silent;
in peace and poise, they chant.

(SGGS pg. 236)

All the acts like sleeping, waking, laughing etc. would be in poise. But today this thing is missing from our lives. Physically also, neither we go to sleep nor awake automatically. We need pills for going to sleep and alarm for waking up. The poise has just vanished from our daily lives.

Like the physical body, our mind is also diseased. The sleep and awakening of mind is under the influence of some effort. Mind awakens due to some effort and not spontaneously. One whose grief, laughing or crying is not in poise, anyone can make him laugh or cry. It means someone else has the control over his crying or laughing. He laughs when he receives something and cries when someone departs. Instead of this, the state should be such that:

Je sukhu dehi ta tujhahi arādhī

dukhi bhī tujhe dhiāi.

Je bhukha dehi ta ita hī rājā

dukha vichi sūkha manāi.

If You will bless me with happiness,
then I will worship and adore You.

Even in pain, I will meditate on You.

Even if You give me hunger, I will still feel satisfied;

I am joyful, even in the midst of sorrow.

(SGGS pg. 757)

These things are vital for forming relationship with God and also to make the family life peaceful. Majority of families have been seen shattered where the relation of pleasure or despair is due to materialistic things.

There is one indication of poise - it requires the conduct that whatever is going on, one should remain pleased with it. In such a state, the deeds are performed but they are not performed under some pressure or formality. One receives everything but there remains no hunger for anything. This is the next state of Sahaj where it is said :

Viṇu boliā sabhu kichhu jāṇadā

kisu āgai kichai aradāsi.

He knows everything, without being told;
unto whom should we offer our prayers ?

(SGGS pg. 1420)

But at present, our stage is in between and that's why we have to say the prayer daily because we are still in the action field and we do not know how long we would have to walk in this exercise of deeds. One does not know when the steps of Union would come ? We are still standing in the field of deeds or in other words, in the first lāv; and the fourth state is still far away.

Gurū Sahib has stated the action field or practice of deeds to be the first class and during the entire life period, man remains

sitting in the first class only. Then how would he attain the degree ? It is imperative that one has to move ahead after passing through the first class but one does not have to stop there. One has to stop only after reaching the destination.

The exercise of deeds or performing actions is necessary and this becomes the behaviour.

Guramukhi miliā subhāi

hari mani tani mīthā lāiā bali rāma jīu.

As Gurmukh, I have met Him, with intuitive ease;
the Lord seems so sweet to my mind and body.

What enters in the behaviour of a person, is the one which is in practice or being performed regularly. Behaviour means habit and it is not formed in a single day. No one can force someone to shed a particular habit, it happens spontaneously, one becomes habitual.

Tū rāma kahana kī chhoḍi bāni.

He said to him, Stop the habit of uttering Lord's Name.

(SGGS pg. 1194)

Habit is the thing for which one does not have to do something and it is being done automatically. Habits are never deserted and that's why parables are made such - 'Habits are full of taste and they take leave with the last breath only'. Bhagat Prahād, when forced to desert the habit of reciting God's Name, said :

Iku rāmu na chhoḍau gurahi gāri.

Mo kau ghāli jāri bhāvai māri ḍāri.

I shall not forsake the One Lord; if I did,

I would be going against my Gurū.

You might as well throw me into the fire and kill me.

(SGGS pg. 1194)

This has become the habit, it happens spontaneously. There is no feeling for it that something has to be done. Alas ! What has to

happen will happen.

It is like breathing, which is crucial for life. One does not have to do something for it, it keeps on going all the time. Breathing is the life of the body, similarly there is a need to recognize the life of the soul.

Man sees the physical body and that's why collects all the material things for the life of this body. He does the efforts for the physical life and provides diet and clothes for it. He is not able to see the soul and neither does he try for it. Man has never tried preparing food for the soul and that's why it remains hungry. Nor man has ever thought of decorating it with clothes. Those who do not prepare the food or cloth of God's Name, their soul always remains hungry.

**Hari nāma hamārā bhojanu chhatiha parkāra
jitu khāiai hama kau tripati bhai.**

**Hari nāmu hamārā painaṇu
jita phiri nange na hovahi
hora painaṇa kī hamārī saradha gai.**

The Lord's Name is my food;
eating the thirty-six varieties of it,
I am satisfied and satiated.
The Lord's Name is my clothing; wearing it,
I shall never be naked again,
and my desire to wear other clothing is gone.

(SGGS pg. 593)

If these resources are not arranged, slowly and steadily the soul starts dying. We see many people in the world whose souls are dead because they have not received this type of diet and clothing. The moment one makes the love of God his poise of life, God's love is always there to assist the man everywhere. This is the symphony

that keeps on moving without breaking and this is called an equipoise or Sahaj.

Sahaje bhojanu sahaje bhāu.

Sahaje miṭio sagala durāu.

Sahaje hoā sādḥū saṅgu.

Sahaji milio parabrahamu nisaṅgu.

Sahaje griha mahi sahaji udāsī.

Sahaje dubidhā tana kī nāsī.

In peace and poise they eat;

in peace and poise they love.

The illusion of duality is easily and totally removed.

They naturally join the Sādḥ Saṅgat,
the Society of the Holy.

In peace and poise, they meet and
merge with the Supreme Lord God.

They are at peace in their homes,
and they are at peace while detached.

In peace, their bodies' duality is eliminated.

(SGGS pg. 236-237)

Further, a decision has been given :

Jā kai sahaji mani bhaiā anandu.

Tā kau bhetīā paramānandu.

Bliss comes naturally to their minds.

They meet the Lord,
the Embodiment of Supreme Bliss.

Anand or bliss is attained in the mind where there is poise. This is called 'Anand Kāraj'.

When there is poise and no conscious effort is left in the life, the deeds of life are beyond conscious efforts and life is full of spontaneity, the Union is attained.

There is no conscious effort and formality of words left with close ones. The past events keep coming in the mind. Once, on the Parkāsh Purab of Gurū Gobind Singh Jī, the famous poet Inderjīt Singh Tulsī recited a poem at Paṭnā Sāhib, the place of Parkāsh of Gurū Sāhib. Nowadays, Paṭnā is the capital of Bihār state and in their language everyone is addressed as 'Bābū'. They address Sikhs also as 'Sardār Bābū'. Tulsī Jī in his poem, while presenting the scenario of childhood of the Tenth Master, addressed Gurū Sāhib as 'Gobind Bābū'. Despite the local language being such, many objected to it. Similarly, Sr. Gurbakhsh Singh Pritlārī also addressed somebody as 'Tū' (you) in his article. There was an objection to it but he wrote beautifully in his reply that the formality of words also creates a gap. All the formalities of words are width or gap only. Do two good friends while talking with each other address one-another as Sir etc. Also, he quoted beautiful examples from Bāṇī and stated that in Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib, nowhere God has been addressed as 'Tusi' or 'Āp', instead 'Tū merā pitā tū merā mātā....Tū merā rākhā sabhanī thāī'. But if we address someone like this, he feels slighted.

This is because we are still in the action field and much below the spiritual level. But as we enter this field or reach the desired level, all these formalities come to an end. There is no formality left when Oneness is attained.

But does the Holy Fear also come to an end when one enters the state of equipoise ? The fear in the action field transforms into the Holy Fear. Holy Fear is also a wall or curtain, meaning the Lord is still residing away from the being. Reaching this next state, the Holy Fear also perishes.

Ei kinehī chākari
jitu bhau khasama na jāi.
 What sort of service is this,

by which the fear of the Lord Master does not depart?

(SGGS pg. 475)

What sort of service or devotion is this, if the fear of Lord remains there ? If one keeps residing apart from Him due to the Holy Fear, there is still a gap and one is not merged in Him.

Nānaka sevakū kāḍhīai

ji setī khasama samāi.

O' Nānak, he alone is called a servant,
who merges with the Lord Master.

Only he is the true servant who merges in Him and is not different from Him. When it is One, the state becomes such that :

Na ohu maratā nā hama ḍariā.

Nā ohu binasai nā hama kaṛiā...

Nā usu bandhana nā hama bādhe.

Nā usu dhandhā nā hama dhādhe...

He does not die, so I do not fear.

He does not perish, so I do not grieve.

He is not bound, so I am not in bondage.

He has no occupation, so I have no entanglements.

(SGGS pg. 391)

But does this become some type of competition ? Absolutely not; instead the state becomes such that nothing is left of the self, He has become everything.

Hama kichhu nāhi ekai ohī.

Āgai pāchai eko soī.

Nānaka guri khoe bhrama bhaṅgā.

Hama oei mili hoe ika raṅgā.

I am nothing; He is the One and only.

Before and after, He alone exists.

O' Nānak, the Gurū has taken away

my doubts and mistakes;
He and I, joining together,
are of the same color.

(SGGS pg. 391)

This is equipoise. It is the state of fourth lāv and it is due to the Union with Lord Master, as a result of which all the efforts are finished and things are happening with intuitive ease.

**Guramukhi miliā subhāi hari
mani tani mīthā lāiā bali rāma jiu.**

As Gurmukh, I have met Him, with intuitive ease;
the Lord seems so sweet to my mind and body.

Then this becomes the characteristic of a Gurmukh :

**Hari mīthā lāiā mere prabha bhāiā
anadīnu hari liva lāi.**

The Lord seems so sweet;
I am pleasing to my God. Night and day,
I lovingly focus my consciousness on the Lord.

As he feels the Lord to be sweet, Lord also starts treating him lovingly. This is applicable both in the physical as well as spiritual world. One has to give respect and honour to those from whom one expects respect. One has to give love to those from whom love is desired. The result ? - One will form a cordial relation with the other and have such a feeling that :

**Mana chindia phalu pāiā suāmī
hari nāmi vajī vādhāi.**

I have obtained my Lord and Master,
the fruit of my mind's desires.

The Lord's Name resounds and resonates.

The task for which the first step was taken, the exercise of deeds was started, is accomplished.

**Hari prabhi thākuri kāju rachāiā
dhana hiradai nāmi vigāsī.**

The Lord God, my Lord and Master,
blends with His bride,
and her heart blossoms forth in the Nām.

What is the significance of these words - 'Hari prabhi thākuri kāju rachāiā' - The Lord God performs the task. Marriage is possible with the presence of both parties. The preparations for the marriage start simultaneously from both the sides. The moment you have yearning for meeting the Lord, you will have a feeling of separation inside and Lord will also start opening the doors of His House for you. The moment you take a step ahead to go in His embrace, He would also start opening His arms for you.

**Janu Nānaku bole chauthī lāvai
hari pāiā prabhu avināsī.**

Servant Nānak proclaims that, in this,
the fourth round of the marriage ceremony,
we have found the Eternal Lord God.

Then there is an outburst of happiness, bliss and this is called 'Anand Kāraj'.

**Guramukhi antari sahaju hai
manu chariā dasavai ākāsi.
Tithai ūgha na bhukha hai
hari ammrītu nāmu sukha vāsu.
Nānaka dukhu sukhu viāpata nahī
jithai ātama rāma pragāsu.**

Within the Gurmukh is intuitive peace and poise;
his mind ascends to the Tenth Plane
of the Akāshic Ethers.

No one is sleepy or hungry there;
they dwell in the peace of
the Ambrosial Name of the Lord.

O' Nānak, pain and pleasure do not afflict anyone,
where the Light of the Lord, the Supreme Soul, illuminates.

(SGGS pg. 1414)

There is no sorrow or pleasure over there. The moment you are in 'Anand Kāraj', there would be no sorrows or pleasures left, the tranquility would pervade your life.

This progress from the action field to the state of equipoise or the Union, are the four lāvā. With these, the life of a householder becomes Anand Kāraj and the spiritual life also becomes blissful. It is imperative that we live our lives according to the meaning of these four lāvās and get inspired by them.

So with the completion of these four lāvās, the ceremony of 'Anand Kāraj' is completed. According to the 'Sikh Rehat Maryādā', these four lāvās are mandatory and the remaining Shabads that we recite in prevalent form like 'Vīāhu hoā mere bābulā', are indications that the marriage has been completed. Because these are indications of post-marriage, that's why immediately after the completion of the four lāvās, Anand Sāhib is recited. The recitation of six pauṛis of Anand Sāhib immediately after the four lāvās indicates that Anand Kāraj has been completed, according to the Sikh Rehat Maryādā.

Further, may Gurū bless and after attaining the bliss, any number of Shabads to express happiness may be recited. One receives pleasure and happiness by reciting the Bāṇī. There is no restriction or prohibition of reciting Bāṇī after these four lāvās, but the ceremony of Anand Kāraj comes to an end over here.



Marriage Accomplished



Viāhu hoā mere bābulā guramukhe hari pāiā.

Agiānu andherā kaṭiā gura giāna prachanḍu balāiā.

Baliā gura giāna andherā binasiā

hari ratanu padārathu lādhā.

Haumai rogu gaiā dukhu lāthā āpu āpai guramati khādhā.

Akāl mūrati varu pāiā abināsī nā kade marai nā jāiā.

Viāhu hoa mere bābolā guramukhe hari pāiā.

My marriage has been performed, O my father.

As Gurmukh, I have found the Lord.

The darkness of ignorance has been dispelled.

The Gurū has revealed the blazing light of spiritual wisdom.

This spiritual wisdom given by the Gurū shines forth,
and the darkness has been dispelled.

I have found the Priceless Jewel of the Lord.

The sickness of my ego has been dispelled,
and my pain is over and done.

Through the Gurū's Teachings,
my identity has consumed my identical identity.

I have obtained my Husband Lord,
the Akāl Mūrat, the Undying Form.

He is Imperishable; He shall never die,
and He shall never ever leave.

My marriage has been performed, O' my father.

As Gurmukh, I have found the Lord.

(SGGS pg. 78)



Marriage Accomplished

One word ‘Gurmukh’ has been used in every Shabad related with the Anand Kāraj. As the journey began with the first lāv, the deeds of Gurmukh are being given the righteous direction. Gurū gives teachings from His mouth and the deeds of Gurmukh linked with the Gurū are transformed into Dharma or righteous deeds. If he had not been a Gurmukh, his deeds would have remained mere rituals only. In the second lāv, the fear arising due to the ego of a Gurmukh was changed to the Holy Fear and to this extent that when he reached the state of equipoise, it became the characteristic of a Gurmukh.

The word ‘Gurmukh’ is of great help at every step in the way of life of the being. Not a single step in the human life can be separated from ‘Gurmukh’. Hence the four lāvās are focused on this word and the marriage has taken place.

Now even after the marriage, the concept of Gurmukh cannot be separated from one’s life because it has been corroborated everywhere. This is indisputable that life is incomplete without this word ‘Gurmukh’. The Gurū’s thought is vital in all circumstances. Be it going about one’s life in the mundane world or seeking spiritual bliss; making this life meaningful or preparing for the life hereafter;

be it nurturing relations with family members or developing closeness with the Almighty Lord. Gurū's teachings and directions are extremely crucial i.e. being Gurmukh (Gurū oriented). This concept of Gurmukh i.e. what Gurū says, is not to be deserted in any way.

Gurasikha mīta chalahu gura chālī.

**Jo guru kahai soī bhala mānahu
hari hari kathā nirālī.**

O' Sikhs of the Gurū, O' friends,
walk on the Gurū's Path.

Whatever the Gurū says, accept that as good;
the sermon of the Lord, Har, Har,
is unique and wonderful.

(SGGS pg. 667)

Gurū's instructions must be sought in making the best use of the valueable assets of life. If you have highly expensive articles or things, ask the method of their use from the Gurū :

**Jāli mohu ghasi masu
kari mati kāgadi kari sāru.
Bhāu kalama kari chitu likhārī
gura puchi likhu bīchāru.**

Burn emotional attachment,
and grind it into ink.

Transform your intelligence into the purest of paper.

Make the love of the Lord your pen,
and let your consciousness be the scribe.

Then, seek the Gurū's Instructions,
and record these deliberations.

(SGGS pg. 16)

Let the worldly attachment be burnt, ground and used for making

the ink. Intellect becomes the paper and let the writer of conscience write with the pen of love on this paper. However, write under the direction of Gurū's teachings to make the best of these priceless articles.

Being Gurmukh is extremely vital. Be it in making the worldly marriage fruitful or seeking union with the Master Lord. If such does not happen, neither one would be linked with the Lord Master nor the family life would be peaceful in this world.

Gurmukh literally means one who follows Gurū's teachings. If one wants happiness in his or her family life, he or she has to live the life according to the Gurū's tenets.

We often see marriages in our life and we too fulfill this responsibility in our lifetime. We perform our marriages in the presence of Sṛī Gurū Granth Sāhib and take circumambulations around the Gurū to perform this Anand Kāraj. Amidst this ceremony, we have the feeling that our future should be bright and our family life should remain peaceful. But Gurū Sāhib has laid down a condition for it. Gurū Sāhib says that all the pleasures and happiness will come in your life and for that, you have to become a 'Gurmukh'. That's why the word 'Gurmukh' is moving simultaneously from the beginning till the end.

Now we should ask Gurū Sāhib, 'O Lord ! We are performing the marriage ceremony and does this dancing-hopping on the roads is acceptable to you ?' Are we dancing with the permission of the Gurū ? We ask for pleasures and happiness from Gurū Sāhib, but does the Gurū accept our women-folk dancing on the streets ? Apart from this, the system of Anand Kāraj in the Amrit Velā or ambrosial hour and many other things have drifted away from us, which had been blessed by the Gurū.

Gurū Sāhib has beautifully narrated the marriage of mind in

the Bāṇī. Mind has taken birth from wisdom. Mind is moulded and shaped according to the company kept by it.

Mātā mati pitā santokhu.
Satu bhāi kari chu visekhu.
Let wisdom be your mother,
and contentment your father.
Let Truth be your brother -
these are your best relatives.

(SGGS pg. 151)

A Gurmukh takes birth from good wisdom and his father is contentment. Truth becomes his brother. The mind of a Gurmukh has the power of truth with it. Brother is symbolic of power and strength. One having the power of truth does not lose one's confidence and is not frightened of anyone. This is the characteristic of a Gurmukh. Now this mind, which has taken birth from the womb of good wisdom, whose father is contentment and brother is truth; he should be married to such type of wife only. And this type of wife will be born in the house of :

Sarama surati dui sasura bhac.
Karaṇi kāmāṇi kari mana lae.
Zeal, effort and intuitive understanding are
my mother-in-law and father-in-law;
I have made good deeds my spouse.

(SGGS pg. 151)

The zeal full of understanding or awareness is her father and consciousness is her mother. Because effort devoid of intuitive understanding is useless. For instance, both mouse and ant have the zeal and perform deeds; both remain awake whole night and are always on the move. In the context of an ant, people say that it accumulates diet for almost six months in its burrow and that's why

it is always seen doing some effort. But the effort of the mouse goes waste because it does not have proper direction. The mouse has the zeal but is devoid of the understanding.

**Jaise kāgada ke bhāra
mūsā tūki gavāvata kāmī nahi gāvāri.**

He is like the mouse,
gnawing away at the pile of paper,
making it useless to the poor wretch.

(SGGS pg. 681)

A mouse wastes the pile of paper by gnawing them away and wastes the valuable books by his useless effort. Mouse performs the deeds but without any understanding. God has given us this intuitive understanding. Now the combination of this consciousness and effort gives birth to a daughter and she is called conduct, deed or behaviour.

Mind is a haven of thoughts. Now the thought is to be married with the deed. Thoughts and conduct will link together and there would be completeness. If the thoughts are not given the practical shape, they are of no use. Deeds, devoid of thoughts, are useless too.

Mind born from good wisdom and contentment; and brought up with the truth as brother, wants conduct born in the house of effort and consciousness. He does not want conduct born in the house of desires and hunger. If mind takes such bride as its wife i.e. gets married to the daughter born from effort and consciousness :

**Sāha sanjogu viāha vijogu.
Sachu santati kahu Nānaka jogu.**
Union with the Holy is my wedding date,

and separation from the world is my marriage.
Says Nānak, Truth is the child born of this Union.

(SGGS pg. 151)

The child bearing the attributes of truthful living would be born out of them.

There are some attributes, accumulation of which gives a pleasant form to the marriage. This marriage of thought and conduct, is the success of the life. The thoughts of Gurū are to be added in our actions, the thoughts of Gurū are to be linked with our behaviour and life would become successful. This thing is vital for the spiritual life as well as the family life.

We have to ask this from ourselves that at the time of our task or ceremonies, we ask for happiness from the Gurū but do we perform these tasks as per the instructions of the Gurū. Today, there are rounds of liquor going on in our marriages in the night and on the next morning, at the time of Anand Kāraj, there are only a handful of people sitting in the presence of Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib. During the night, there is a heavy turnout of people with the marriage party because liquor is being served at that time. We call them jājhī or members of the marriage party. But whom does Gurū Sāhib treat as member of the marriage party :

**Suri nara gaṇa gandharaba mili āe
apūrab janja baṇāi.**

The angels and mortal beings,
the heavenly heralds and celestial singers,
have come together and
formed a wondrous wedding party.

(SGGS pg. 775)

The marriage party should be such in which Gurmukhs come together. But today, opposite of this is happening. Due to the late

night rounds of liquor, the relatives can not wake up at proper time. As a result of this, we are losing the ambrosial hour in our lives and also, the marriage party reaches the bride's place in the afternoon and many times in the evening, instead of early morning hours. At such occasions, our Granthī Singhs are also forced to perform such Ardās at the time of Anand Kāraj, 'O True Gurū ! With your blessings, the ceremony of Anand Kāraj has been completed according to the Gurmat Maryādā laid by You.' They also seem helpless in performing such acts.

What is this Amrit Velā or ambrosial hour ? This is the time of euphonic combination when there is a union of night and day. This is the time when night is about to finish and day is going to start. This time is there during evening too, but there is a difference between the two. In the evening, day is coming to an end and night is the future. Though there is a union over here too, but here the union is such that light is going and darkness is about to arrive. That's why at this time, darkness is the future. On the other hand, Amrit Velā is very pious because at that time, night is about to finish and the brightness of the life is approaching, meaning that future is arriving with light in it. There is an euphonic combination at the time of Amrit Velā and this combination is called the union. But we are fast losing this time of union in our lives.

Here I want to share my experience with you. I have also passed through this door. I entered the life of a householder around fifty years back. I am not sharing this to endorse a stamp of Gurmukh upon me, I cannot claim to be a Gurmukh.

On the day of my Anand Kāraj, the elders asked the Granthī Singh to decorate the palanquin of Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib as Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib would go to the bride's place along with the marriage party. I was around 15-16 years of age at that time; I was

married off at a small age. At 3.30 in the morning, all the members of the family started moving to the bride's place, reciting the Shabads on the way. I was blessed with the service of carrying Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib on my head. Reaching the bride's place, Parkāsh of Gurū Sāhib was done at 4 am and Gurū's Kirtaniā, Bhāi Sāhib Bhāi Ātmā Singh Jī of Gurū kī Samādh recited the entire Bāṇī of Āsā kī Vār till 7 am. All the members of the marriage party sat there listening to the Kirtan of Āsā kī Vār and Anand Kāraj. Today also, I visualize that scenario in front of my eyes.

But one is astonished to see the prevailing conditions. As the Sikh is fast receiving materialistic things, he is going afar from the Gurū. Today, these materials have drifted him away from spirituality. There has been excessiveness of vices in our lives that have separated us from the Orders of the Gurū and the Sikh Rehat Maryādā. Though there is no particular time set for Anand Kāraj, there is no restriction of time period for it but we have to make sure that we do not lose this Amrit Velā or ambrosial hour. This is the time of euphonic combination and this is to bring radiance in our future. But this will be possible only if we link ourselves with the Gurū in the ambrosial hours. Due to the usage of liquor, this blessing is drifting away from our hands.

Apart from this, one more dreadful disease of dowry system has entered our houses. Though Sikhs have been clearly instructed in 'Sikh Rehat Maryādā', not to maintain any relationship with the killer of a daughter or one indulging in female foeticide. Our history also states that when great Sikh general Sr. Jassā Singh Ramgarhiā was accused of killing his daughter, the entire Panth boycotted him. As the misconception was removed with the passage of time, all again sat together. But a time came in the life of the Sikh general when the Panth turned its eyes from him due to the accusation of

killing a girl. So, if we lay the conditions of dowry in our marriage ceremony, it is as if we are ourselves creating hurdles for our own daughters. Today, dowry alone is the reason behind the death of many of our daughters. Seeing this, the parents have been forced to misuse the technology and are ready to kill the foetus after determining its sex. Why all this is being done, who is to be blamed for all this, who is the real culprit, who is the killer of all these girls ?
- Only and only dowry.

It is not such that one does not have to give dowry. Though there may be no demand or wish in our mind, but who has to give her daughter, whatever they have reserved for her, they would give it anyway. Then why to demand anything and create disturbance in someone's house with the demands. Instead the demands should be such :

**Hari prabha mere bābulā
hari devahu dānu mai dājo.
Hari kaparo hari sobhā devahu
jitu savare merā kājo.**

O' my father, give me the Name of the Lord God
as my wedding gift and dowry.
Give me the Lord as my wedding gown,
and the Lord as my glory,
to accomplish my works.

(SGGS pg. 78)

O' Lord ! You link us with the attributes of Your Name. What type of dowry can be better than the attributes of Lord residing in one's heart.

One should see that bride has many attributes and qualities, which are coming along with her without any expense. But this is to happen from both the sides - parents should know that they have to

imbibe good qualities in the daughter and how they are to be imbibed, this has to be asked from the Gurū. The in-laws family should also know that they have to see the attributes of the girl rather than the dowry brought by her. But today the bitter truth is that before seeking the alliance, one sees how much could her family give away in the marriage. Although Gurū Sāhib prohibits us from such things :

**Hori manamukha dāju
ji rakhi dikhālahi
su kūrū ahankāru kachu pājo.**

Any other dowry, which
the self-willed manmukhs offer for show,
is only false egotism and a worthless display.

(SGGS pg. 79)

These all are indicative of ego. The show or display of dowry is the sign of ego. Showing the dowry to be given and displaying the dowry articles at the in-law's place is also a sign of ego. This is a fold of illusion on the person that will shed away one day or the other. If one gives plenty as dowry in the marriage, the other party has an illusion that they are having good amount of wealth and with this, starts the series of demands. Today we hear and read daily that girls are being sacrificed due to the dowry system. If such is happening in the Sikh families, it should be well understood that the concept of Gurmukh has not entered our lives and instead, it is some other dowry which the self-willed persons have collected in the marriages in their families.

Gurū Sāhib says that if you wish to seek pleasure in both the worlds - have a desire for the pleasure of Lord's Union and want to attain happiness in your family, this word 'Gurmukh' is not to be forgotten. Whatever is to be attained, it will be from the radiance of

this word 'Gurmukh'. If we live according to the teachings of the Bāṇī and in the Gurū's Will, we will feel :

Viāhu hoa mere bābolā

guramukhe hari pāiā.

My marriage has been performed, O' my father.

As Gurmukh, I have found the Lord.

* * * * *

Sikh Rehat Maryādā

(The Code of Sikh Conduct and Conventions)

Anand Sanskar (Lit. Joyful Ceremonial : Sikh Matrimonial Ceremony and Conventions) - Article XVIII

- a. A Sikh man and woman should enter wedlock without giving thought to the prospective spouse's caste and descent.
- b. A Sikh's daughter must be married to a Sikh.
- c. A Sikh's marriage should be solemnized by Anand marriage rites.
- d. Child marriage is taboo for Sikhs.
- e. When a girl becomes marriageable, physically, emotionally and by virtue of maturity of character, a suitable Sikh match should be found and she be married to him by Anand marriage rites.
- f. Marriage may not be preceded by engagement ceremony. But if an engagement ceremony is sought to be held, a congregational gathering should be held and, after offering the Ardās before the Gurū Granth Sāhib, a Kirpān, a steel bangle and some sweets may be tendered to the boy.
- g. Consulting horoscopes for determining which day or date is auspicious or otherwise for fixing the day of the marriage is a sacrilege. Any day that the parties find suitable by mutual consultation should be fixed.
- h. Putting on floral or gilded face ornamentation, decorative headgear or red thread band round the wrist, worshipping of ancestors, dipping feet in milk mixed with water, cutting a berī or janḍī (Prosopis spieigera) bushes, filling pitcher, ceremony of retirement in feigned displeasure, reciting couplets, performing havans (Sacrificial fire), installing vedī (a wooden canopy or pavilion under which Hindū marriages are performed), prostitutes' dances, drinking liquor, are all sacrileges.
- i. The marriage party should have as small a number of people as the girl's people desire. The two sides should greet each other singing sacred hymns and finally by the Sikh greetings of Wāhegurū jī kā Khālsā, Wāhegurū jī ki Fateh.
- j. For marriage, there should be a congregational gathering in the holy presence of Gurū Granth Sāhib. There should be hymn-singing by rāgīs or by the whole congregation. Then the girl and the boy should be made to sit facing the Gurū Granth Sāhib. The girl should sit on the left side of the boy. After soliciting the congregation's permission, the master of the marriage ceremony (who may be a man or a woman) should bid the boy and girl and their parents or guardians to stand and should offer the Ardās for the commencement of the Anand marriage ceremony. The officiant should then apprise the boy and the girl of the duties and obligations of conjugal life according to the Gurū's tenets.

He should initially give to the two an exposition of their common mutual obligations. He should tell them how to model the husband-wife relationship on the love between the individual soul and the Supreme Soul in the light of the contents of circumambulation (Lāvā) hymns in the Sūhī measure (rāg) section (The bulk of the Gurū Granth Sāhib is divided on the basis of the rāgas (measures) of the Indian classical music. Sūhī is one of the rāgas featuring in the Gurū Granth Sāhib) of the Gurū Granth Sāhib.

He should explain to them the notion of the state of "a single soul in two bodies" to be achieved through love and make them see how they may attain union with the Immortal Being discharging duties and obligations of the householders' life. Both of them, they should be told, have to make their conjugal union a means to the fulfillment of the purpose of the journey of human existence;

both have to lead clean and Guru-oriented lives through the instrumentality of their union. He should then explain to the boy and girl individually their respective conjugal duties as husband and wife.

The bridegroom should be told that the girl's people having chosen him as the fittest match from among a whole lot, he should regard his wife as his better half, accord to unflinching love and share with her all that he has. In all situations, he should protect her person and honour, he should be completely loyal to her and he should show much respect and consideration for her parents and relations as for his own.

The girl should be told that she has been joined in matrimony to her man in the hallowed presence of the Gurū Granth Sāhib and the congregation. She should ever harbour for him deferential solicitude, regard him the lord master of her love and trust; she should remain firm in her loyalty to him and serve him in joy and sorrow and in every clime (native or foreign) and should show the same regard and consideration to his parents and relatives as she would, to her own parents and relatives.

The boy and girl should bow before the Gurū Granth Sāhib to betoken their acceptance of these instructions. Thereafter, the girl's father or the principal relation should make the girl grasp one end of the sash which the boy is wearing over his shoulders and the person in attendance of the Gurū Granth Sāhib should recite the matrimonial circumambulation stanzas {Lāvā of the fourth Gurū in the Sūhī musical measure section of the Gurū Granth Sāhib} (Pg. 773-4). After the conclusion of the recitation of each of the stanzas, the boy, followed by the girl holding the end of the sash, should go round the Gurū Granth Sāhib while the rāgis or the congregation sing out the recited stanza.

The boy and girl, after every circumambulation, should bow before the Gurū Granth Sāhib in genuflexion, lowering their forehead to touch the ground and then stand up to listen to the recitation of the next stanza. There being four matrimonial circumambulation stanzas in the concerned hymn, the proceeding will comprise four circumambulations with the incidental singing of the stanza. After the fourth circumambulation, the boy and girl should, after bowing before the Gurū Granth Sāhib, sit down at the appointed place and the Rāgis or the person who has conducted the ceremony should recite the first five and the last stanza of the Anand Sāhib. Thereafter, the Ardās should be offered to mark the conclusion of the Anand marriage ceremony and the sacred pudding, distributed.

- k. Persons professing faiths other than the Sikh faith cannot be joined in wedlock by the Anand Kāraj ceremony.
- l. No Sikh should accept a match for his/her son or daughter for monetary consideration.
- m. If the girl's parents at any time or on any occasion visit their daughter's home and a meal is ready there, they should not hesitate to eat there. Abstaining from eating at the girl's home is a superstition. The Khālsā has been blessed with the boon of victuals and making others eat by the Gurū and the Immortal Being. The girl's and boy's people should keep accepting each other's hospitality, because the Gurū has joined them in relationship of equality (Prem Sumārag).
- n. If a woman's husband has died, she may, if she so wishes, finding a match suitable for her, remarry. For a Sikh man whose wife has died, similar ordinance obtains.
- o. The remarriage may be solemnized in the same manner as the Anand marriage.
- p. Generally, no Sikh should marry a second wife if the first wife is alive.
- q. A baptised ought to get his wife also baptised.

Guideline for the phonetic transcription of Gurmukhī script

V O W E L S

ਅ	ਆ	ਇ	ਈ	ਉ	ਊ
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū
ਏ	ਐ	ਓ	ਔ	ਅੰ	ਆਂ
e	ai	o	au	an/am*	ā**

C O N S O N A N T S

ਕ	ਖ	ਗ	ਘ	ਙ			
k	kh	g	gh [†]	ṅ			
ਚ	ਛ	ਜ	ਝ	ਞ			
ch/c	chh/ch	j	jh [†]	ṇ			
ਟ	ਠ	ਡ	ਢ	ਣ			
ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh [†]	ṇ			
ਤ	ਥ	ਦ	ਧ	ਨ			
t	th	d	dh [†]	n			
ਪ	ਫ	ਬ	ਭ	ਮ			
p	ph	b	bh [†]	m			
ਯ	ਰ	ਲ	ਵ	ੜ			
y	r	l	v/w	ṛ			
ਸ	ਹ	ਸ਼	ਕ਼	ਖ਼	ਗ਼	ਜ਼	ਫ਼
s	h	ś/sh	q	<u>kh</u>	gh	z	f

* an/am symbol stands for a homorganic nasal consonant, i.e. the nasal consonant will take the articulatory shape of the following consonant : ṅ before velar consonants, ṇ before palatal consonants, ṇ before retroflex consonants, n before alveolar consonants and m before bilabial consonants.

** ā - a ~ sign over a vowel indicates a nasalised vowel.

† The voiced aspirated stops gh, jh, ḍh, dh and bh are generally articulated as ká, cá, tá, tá and pá with a native accent, respectively, in the word initial position.

Note : A single graphemic consonants like ਕ is phonetically perceived as ਕ+ਅ (k+a = ka). Hence, this phonetic fact has been represented in all examples. This stream has been followed in this book to quote the Gurbāṇī.